

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

# VUEWEEKLY

NO. 611 / JULY 5 - JULY 11, 2007  
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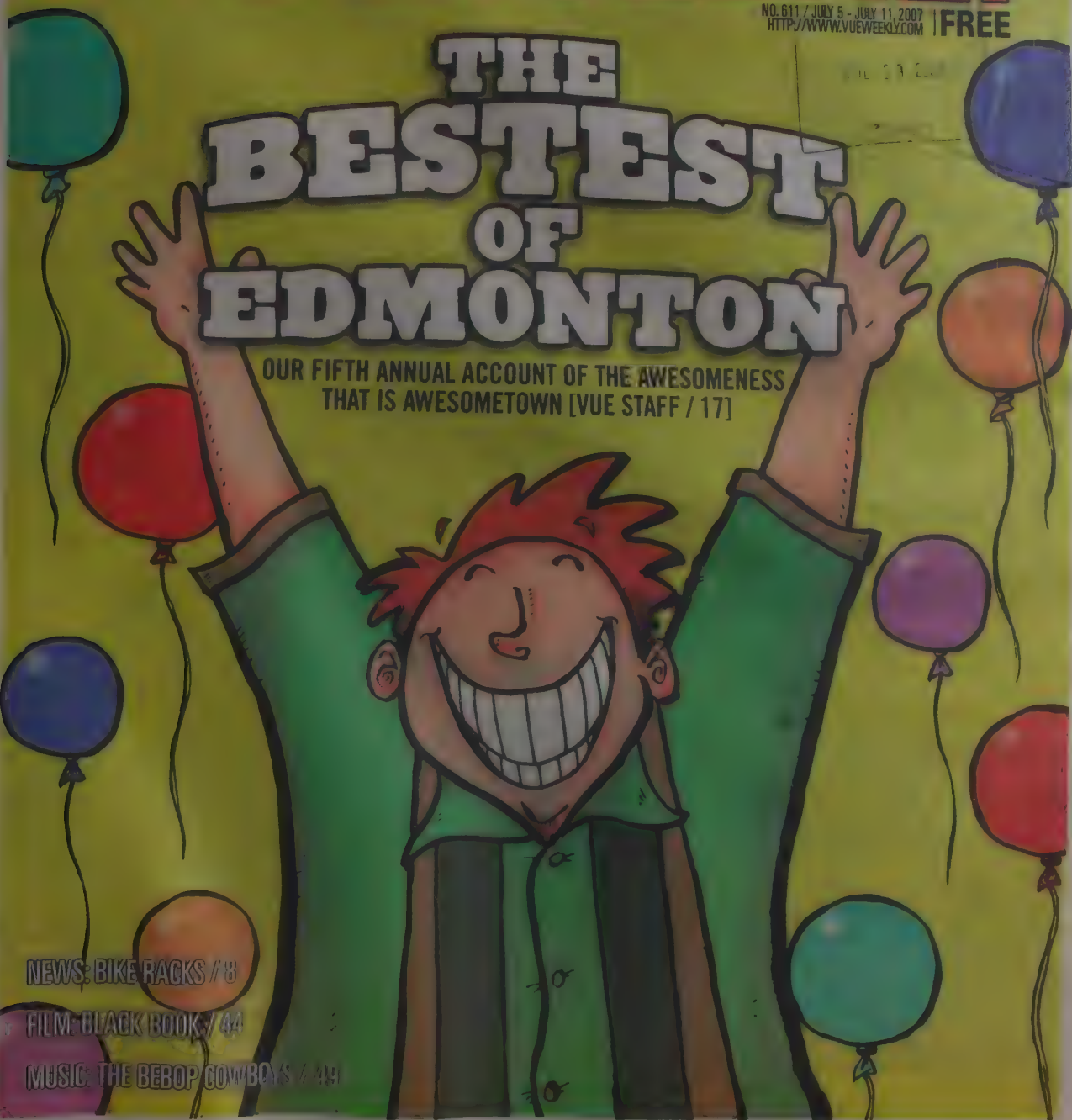
## THE BESTEST OF EDMONTON

OUR FIFTH ANNUAL ACCOUNT OF THE AWESOMENESS  
THAT IS AWESOMETOWN [VUE STAFF / 17]

NEWS: BIKE RACKS / 8

FILM: BLACK BOOK / 44

MUSIC: THE BEBOP COWBOYS / 49



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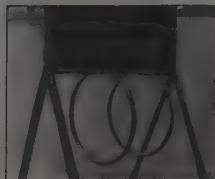
## ON THE COVER



### BESTEST OF EDMONTON / 17

This one goes out to you, Edmonton, the rocking-est city in all of rock-dom. Whool

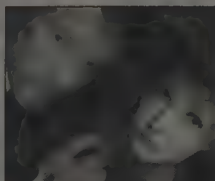
## NEWS



### MIKE RACKS / 8

"The City and the People's Pedal interpretation was that racks were donated for good, and the owner's interpretation was, 'Oh, no, I've donated use of the racks,'" —Claire Stock, City of Edmonton transportation department

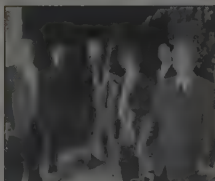
## FILM



### BLACK BOOK / 45

"There's about as many double-crosses and wild plot twists to this thing as there are nude scenes (that is, a lot)." —Josef Braun, *Vue* reviewer

## MUSIC



### TOP COWBOYS / 49

"We love to have nice tight arrangements where we can blow and improvise, but the idea is to serve the song, and that's the great thing about western swing, too, is that the songs are so good." —Howard Willett, frontman

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# Fort McMurray, Fort McProblems

ANDREW CISAKOWSKI / [cisa@vnewweekly.com](mailto:cisa@vnewweekly.com)

For the past decade, Fort McMurray has grown at a rate of 10 per cent per year, over twice the provincial average. During this time it has developed all the characteristics of a boomtown: skyrocketing prices, overstretched infrastructure and a growing homeless problem. Only able to raise money through increasing property taxes, the city is at a loss of how to deal with these problems. More and more, public pressure is mounting for oil companies to foot the bill.

In the early '90s, with the price of oil hovering around \$20 a barrel (the tar sands need a price of about \$40 a barrel to turn a profit) the Klein government attempted to woo big oil with a bargain-basement one per cent royalty rate. Now that the price has been (and looks sure to continue being) around \$70 a barrel, many are questioning the sanity of such low taxation. With investment (already about \$35 billion, with another \$45 billion on the way) pouring in, the amount of money received by the Alberta government via royalties is, in fact, falling.

As the oil industry swallows all the local resources, the city's infrastructure is unable to keep up. A growing number of homeless walk the streets. Doctors and teachers complain of being overwhelmed. Because of overflowing sewer lines, construction has been halted in the city centre, leading to growing urban sprawl. With few avenues of entertainment and lots of money, drug use has exploded among oil patch workers, at more than four times the provincial average.

There is also a growing environmental concern. Oil from the tar-sands is particularly carbon intense (about two to three times more carbon is emitted as from traditional wells), as natural gas is used in separating the oil from the sand. And as each hole is several kilometres in width, about 3000 square kilometres of forest is being cleared.

A large source of oil in Canada is, of course, tempting to foreign oil companies. With the high price of oil, the artificially low royalty rate is no longer needed. Not only would an increase in the royalty rate help pad Alberta's coffers, but also it would act as a break to slow the overheated Northern Alberta economy, allowing resources to divert to where they are badly needed. ▀

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## MAIL LETTERS

### PITT GROWER'S LEAD DRINKEN

Your recent piece about medicinal marijuana ("MS sufferers are still enduring reefer madness," Well Well Well, June 28 - July 4), has several errors that need to be clarified.

The medicinal marijuana provided by Health Canada is not 3 per cent THC; it is 12.5 per cent, plus or minus 2 per cent. 12.5 per cent exceeds the THC content of about 80 per cent of the product found on the street and exceeds the 12 per cent you quoted as the THC content of the Vancouver Island Compassion Club Society's marijuana.

The product produced for Health Canada by Prairie Plant Systems is tested for all forms of heavy metals (including arsenic) and microbial contaminations. No other medicinal marijuana undergoes such strenuous testing. For the record, in a recent evaluation conducted by CAN-TOX Health Sciences, Arsenic levels in Health Canada's marijuana were found to be 20 times below the minimum accepted standard established by the Natural Health Products Directorate. Rigorous quality control by Health Canada insures a consistent, safe, high quality product for patients who cannot afford to have product that is unsafe or varying greatly

in THC content.

There was exactly one lot of Health Canada product that had THC content below 12.5 per cent. This was done by design on Lot-1. After receiving complaints from its patients, Health Canada changed its policy to provide full strength (12.5 per cent) THC marijuana. They also increased the moisture content and the grind size to make it more acceptable to the patients.

If you check the statistics published by Health Canada you will note that ordering and use of the Health Canada medicinal marijuana continues to increase. At \$5.00 per gram (about half of street price) delivered to the patients door, it is a safe and effective source of medicinal marijuana.

Further there is no proof that irradiated product is a carcinogen. On a daily basis almost everyone is in contact with products that are irradiated. For example most imported spices used in day to day cooking are irradiated to destroy bacteria, molds etc. As far as phosphate fertilizers go, even natural/organic fertilizers have phosphates in them—they just come from a different source. Phosphates are one of the most common ingredients in fertilizers and are used in almost every form of plant nutrient.

The Vancouver Island Compassion Club's product "claims" to be Organic. We would assume they are designated organic by a regulating body—but consider this: what is the value of an "organic"

product that is smoked? Further, being "grown" organic doesn't mean it's safe from microbial issues or that it does not have poisonous heavy metals in it. All it means is that no chemicals were used and that the land it was grown on was not subjected to such chemicals in the last 3 to 5 years. If anything the potential for microbial contaminations increases under organic conditions.

BRENT ZITTE, PRESIDENT  
PRAIRIE PLANT SYSTEMS

Editor's note: Vue health columnist Connie Howard's information on the potency of Prairie Plant Systems' marijuana is based on lab tests conducted by advocacy group Canadians for Safe Access comparing certified medicinal marijuana obtained from Health Canada to pot provided by the Vancouver Island Compassion Club. In the interest of journalistic integrity, Vue offered to conduct our own independent analysis, however Prairie Plant Systems is so far less than enthusiastic about providing a sample.

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108th Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by e-mail ([letters@vnewweekly.com](mailto:letters@vnewweekly.com)). Preference is given to feedback about articles published in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.



# Poverty's unlucky number: 07 for 07

## OXFAM AND MAKE POVERTY HISTORY LAUNCH CAMPAIGN

MURRAY SINCLAIR / [murray@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:murray@vancouverweekly.com)

The business owners participating in this weekend's "07 for 07" campaign had different knowledge levels about poverty in the developing world, but they were all able to think with their heart.

"Social consciousness was a common denominator among all of them," said Gagan Sandhu, a campaign spokeswoman.

The fundraiser will see more than 40 Edmonton businesses displaying bright yellow "07 for 07" signs this Sat, Jul 7 (07/07/07—get it?). The plan is to increase awareness about what organizers say is Canada's unfulfilled commitment to increase foreign aid spending to 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product.

In keeping with the seven-ly theme, businesses displaying the 07 for 07 posters will be donating seven per cent of their Saturday sales to 07 for 07 partners Make Poverty History and Oxfam Canada to support their advocacy, development, research, and humanitarian work.

A campaign press release says Jul 7 also marks the halfway point to completing the millennium development goals (MDGs), a United Nations initiative aimed at fighting poverty.

The 0.7 per cent figure was an idea that came out of Canada during the 1960s, when then-Prime Minister Lester B Pearson suggested it as a benchmark for wealthy countries to give to poorer ones.

At 2005's G8 meeting of industrialized countries in Scotland, member nations including Canada joined other European countries in pledging to donate 0.7 per cent of their GDPs by 2015.

"When you put it all together, it's a lot of money," said Sandhu, citing reports estimating a total of \$60 billion of aid.

**HERE IN CANADA**, anti-poverty groups convinced all parties in the minority Parliament to endorse the country's 0.7 per cent goal.

The money would go to the 15-year MDGs, which are aimed at eliminating extreme poverty throughout the world and improving access to water, sanitation, education and health services, says the release.

While 12 countries—including Sweden, Norway, France and Great Britain—have already reached the

0.7 goal, Canada is currently contributing only 0.31 per cent of its GDP, and is not on track to meet its 2015 commitment.

There's still time for Canada to meet its target, but getting there will ultimately mean more money for the MDGs, and the campaign wants keep the public's attention on the international promise.

"The issue is making sure they remember they made this commitment and should do it, regardless of who's in power," said Sandhu, who noted Canada has no timetable in place to get to the goal.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who took over from Liberal ex-PM Paul Martin who made the G8 commitment, has said that Canada would meet the average amount committed by countries by 2010.

## NEWS FUNDRAISER

Sandhu said this is a "wishy-washy way around it" as that average is projected to be 0.42 per cent by then, while Canada would have to get to 0.51 per cent at that time to meet its goal five years later.

Along with the fleeting political memories, anti-poverty organizers also have to deal with a public that generally doesn't know about the 0.7 goal and its related issues.

They also have to answer to the view held by some who oppose granting money to help with social problems, particularly outside Canada, or who say, "Charity begins at home."

Some of the businesses approached by the campaign made that last statement, which Sandhu said was understandable, particularly in the summer, when homelessness becomes more visible.

But she said Make Poverty History, which will take in half the proceeds from 07 in 07, works to eliminate poverty in Canada as well as internationally.

The problem is not as widespread in this country as elsewhere, Sandu pointed out, because health-care and education services are widely available to Canadians.

"A lot of Third World countries do not have access to public services," she said, noting that 4000 children die every year worldwide due to lack of clean water. "These are not luxu-

ries, but basic social services."

The spokeswoman also agreed that there's an international security and anti-terrorism aspect to helping curb global poverty in the post-9/11 world.

"Countries plagued by poverty have more civil unrest," she said, noting how Canadian troops are serving in Afghanistan. "We could prevent an Afghanistan-like situation."

**SANDU SAID** the business owners approached generally shared the public's lack of knowledge about the 0.7 per cent target, but supported the idea that the government should increase foreign aid, especially after canvassers explained the issue.

"If they didn't know the details," she said, "they wanted to know about it."

Three participating local businesses contacted by Vue echoed Sandu's points about the campaign, and added their own.

"It's just the right thing to do, and it's everybody doing a small part," said the Paint Spot's Kim Fjordbotten. She saw 07 for 07 as a simple way to get the message out and express her feelings of responsibility.

"My products come from all over the world," she said, "so while it's good to support the community, it's also important to think of the bigger picture."

Both Fjordbotten and Southside Sound owner Peter Sutherland cited "karma" as the reason for joining. People have helped him before, Sutherland explained, and he felt the need to "keep the circle turning."

"We live very well in this country, more than we need to," he said. "We can afford to kick back (some of our wealth). It can't do any harm."

Sutherland said he is generally familiar with the issue of getting the government to live up to its commitment, as is Redbike owner Cliff Valentgoud, who believes governments in North America are driven more by self-interest and are happy to foist charity work on individuals, while having the means to help by taking half of an average person's wages for taxes.

"It's an issue that's always niggled at me," he said, defining the campaign as more of a political statement than charity initiative.

An evolving list of participating businesses can be found at <http://07for07.googlepages.com>. ■

## Canada's mid-life crisis

RICARDO ACUÑA / [valharta.ca/partland](mailto:valharta.ca/partland)

The old adage tells us that with age comes wisdom. As we grow older, the sum of our life's experiences, successes and disappointments makes us better able to recognize the dangers and possibilities inherent in new challenges that face us.

As I sat down to write this column on the occasion of Canada's 140th birthday, it occurred to me that perhaps countries should also grow wiser with age—that somehow, the collective experience and knowledge we have gained over the course of our nation's existence should guide us as we move forward in the world.

Confederation came about as a way of establishing a new level of independence and sovereignty for the colonies of British North America—a confederation independent from both British politics and from the increasing power of the burgeoning United States.

It was with respect to the latter that John A Macdonald famously warned Canada to work hard at avoiding becoming little more than a source of cheap resources for the growing American economy. If our government did not take concerted steps to keep our economy independent and to protect and develop our value-added industries and economy we would become mere "haulers of wood and drawers of water" to the US, with our resources fuelling their economic development rather than ours.

To this end, Macdonald's Conservative Party implemented a national tariffs policy to protect Canadian value-added manufacturing and sponsored the construction of three trans-continental railways. These policies served Canada well and enabled the country to become one of the richest in the world with a solid manufacturing and service base.

One would think that, 140 years later, a mature country would be able to take the positive outcomes of those early policies, store them in long term memory and continue to use the lessons they provide to propel itself forward in a positive way.

**THE REALITY, HOWEVER**, is otherwise. Rather than benefiting from the wisdom of its years, Canada is acting rather like a middle-aged man going through crisis and squandering his family's future on frivolities and get rich quick schemes even though he is old enough to know better.

Take, for example, what Canada is doing with its energy resources. We abandoned a concerted national energy policy, flawed as it was, in order to sign NAFTA and provide the United States guaranteed access to our

oil and gas. We signed an agreement stating that even if we are in some sort of energy crisis, we have to prioritize the amount of energy we send south. Consider it a long-term lease on a high-end sports car that we cannot get out of even if our family is broke and homeless.

The government then allowed—and actually encouraged—the building of a pipeline to facilitate the export to the US of our natural gas without adding any value to it whatsoever. And because that policy has proven to be a complete disaster for Alberta's petrochemical industry, the government is following suit by looking the other way while industry moves to build pipelines which will take most of the raw oil coming being mined in Alberta and send it to the US for processing and refining.

To follow through on the analogy, it's tantamount to selling your family's home at a discount in order to invest in some get rich quick pyramid scheme, which is sure to end in failure.

**CANADA WAS FOUNDED**—and spurred onto success—by the building of railroads to facilitate east-west trade, commerce and communication. Nearly a century and a half later, our leaders have decided that the key to our future is by building pipelines from north to south, ignoring the energy and economic security of other Canadians.

The dangers of ignoring the wisdom gained with age are well-documented—countless numbers of families have been torn apart, countless futures have been jeopardized and countless homes and businesses have been lost.

Clearly, we need a change of course in Canada. We have become, despite the warnings of the past, hewers of wood and haulers of water for the United States.

The only option left, lest we lose our future, is for Canadians to stand up and reassert loudly that this is our country, these are our resources, and that this is our future, and that the role of our government is to defend, protect and promote them, not gamble them away on a whim. It's time, if you will, for a national intervention in order to put our country back on track. A 140th birthday is much too late for a mid-life crisis—let's start acting like the wise old country we really are. ■

Ricardo Acuña is Executive Director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta

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# No racks until at least 'late summer'

CITY SAYS BIKERS MIGHT HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL SPRING OF 08

CHLOE FEDIO / chloef@vancouverweekly.com

Bicycle racks are a crucial piece of infrastructure for Edmonton cyclists, especially during the warmer summer months when many forgo vehicles in favour of bikes. However, finding a place to park your bike just got a little harder as some bike racks in the city are being replaced with empty space—and it may be a while until they're back.

As reported in last week's *Vue*, the triangular, free-standing racks began disappearing across the city in mid-June from major roadways, like Jasper and Whyte Avenues, and non-roadways, like community and recreation centres. The loss has been particularly problematic for People's Pedal, who used the some of the racks for their bike-sharing service.

"Some of our bikes actually went missing with the racks," explained Karly Coleman, treasurer of the People's Pedal board of directors. "The justification for taking [the bikes] was that they didn't belong to anybody," so obviously it wouldn't be an issue. They took the racks and the bikes, but, in fact, they belong to the society."

Members of People's Pedal have a code to a lock box, allowing them to access a bike for a minimal amount of time before returning it to one of eight "hubs," which are bike racks characterized by their red colour. According to Coleman, four bikes were taken along with the racks, but have since been reclaimed from the where the racks are being stored in east Edmonton.

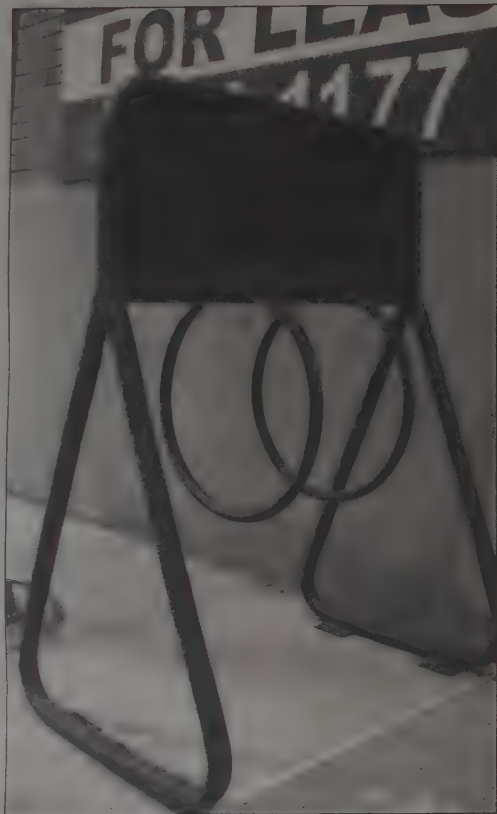
"The society put a lot of effort into getting this system up and running, so there's a bit of a crisis with People's Pedal because they worked hard to get them out there and any break in the system just sort of wrecks the collective memory of how to use it, and where they are," Coleman said.

Claire Stock, a bicycle transportation planner for the City of Edmonton, explained that for a decade the city had an ongoing agreement to lease the racks from a private company called Street Talk Inc. The City allowed the company to advertise on the racks in exchange for public use.

Though the contract expired a few months ago, Street Talk Inc initially agreed to leave the racks out while a new two-year agreement was negotiated, Stock explained. However, when the city rejected a proposal from Street Talk Inc asking for \$2500 per month in addition to advertising revenue, the racks began to be taken by the owner.

"If the City is going to invest in infrastructure, we don't want advertising. We want to have a good quality rack that is unobtrusive but functional," Stock said.

**THE CITY IS IN THE process of updating the 1992 Bicycle Transportation Plan, which deals with infrastructure, routes and support-**



## NEWS FOLLOW UP

ing programs. A plan for downtown is also in the works, which has a very strong emphasis on urban design and street-scaping. New racks are expected along with these reviews, and Stock said that the removal of racks was expected—for the most part.

"The City and the People's Pedal interpretation was that racks were donated for good, and the owner's interpretation was, 'Oh, no. I've donated use of the racks,'" Stock said. "He has ceased to take the red racks, and we've now negotiated that we will buy and donate to the People's Pedal the racks," Stock said, explaining that the City plans to buy seven or eight additional racks so that the organization can expand.

Although *Vue* made repeated phone calls and left several messages, representatives of Street Talk Inc could not be reached for comment.

Racks for the People's Pedal and non-roadway locations should be

back in a couple of weeks or less, as the City negotiates a purchase from Street Talk Inc, but Stock explained that it will take longer for on-street racks to be returned.

"Undoubtedly, it will take a couple months to sort of sort all of that out, and to get them ordered and to get them installed. So we ask that cyclists, in the interim, be patient," Stock said. "Optimistically, I like to think that by late summer we'll have something on the streets, and if not for summer, well then certainly for the spring next year."

The racks are currently located with the advertising panels in mind, but the new racks will be placed to better meet the needs of cyclists.

"We hope to have, ultimately a program where cyclists can readily call us and say 'Oh, I need a rack outside this destination' and we would be able to respond to that so there's some really positive bike parking programs that's much more responsive," she said. "Rather than putting a rack where it's an advertising panel cause it's a good position, putting a rack where it's functional." ♡

# Why 'worry about terror' plots? Nobody else does...

COMMENT

## DYER STRAIGHT

GWYNNE DYER  
gwyndye@vancouverweekly.com

As terrorists go, this was *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight*. One of the would-be London bombers on Jun 29 drove erratically down Haymarket (a busy street in the heart of central London's theatre district)—presumably affected by the fumes from the gas cylinders and gasoline containers that were the heart of his makeshift car-bomb—before crashing into a garbage bin, getting out and running away. Another parked his explosives-packed car illegally, so it was towed away. The third attack was at Glasgow airport on the following day, but nobody was hurt except one of the attackers, who set himself on fire.

More competent terrorists might have killed dozens of people, of course, but it's safe to say that this incident will be taken more seriously in the United States than it is in Britain itself or anywhere else in Europe. An occasional terrorist attack is one of the costs of doing business in the modern world. You just have to bring a sense of proportion to the problem, and in general people in Europe do.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown issued the obligatory statement that Britain faces "a serious and continuous threat" and that the public "need to be alert" at all times, but there were none of the efforts to pump up the threat, none of the declarations that civilization itself was under attack that were standard issue when Tony Blair was running the show. Blair has gone off to bring the blessings of peace to the Middle East, and the British government is no longer compelled to seize on every passing event as evidence that it was right to invade Iraq.

Blair can't do that much harm in the Middle East, as there's no hope of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement in the foreseeable future anyway. The Russians nearly vetoed Blair's appointment and the British Foreign Office is said to be in an "institutional sulk," but it doesn't really matter much. Neither do the car-bombs that didn't explode in London and Glasgow.

Most major European countries had already been through some sort of terrorist crisis well before the current fashion for "Islamist" terrorism: the IRA in Britain, the OAS in France, ETA in Spain, the Baader-Meinhof Gang in Germany, the Red Brigades and their neo-fascist counterparts in Italy. Most European cities have also been heavily bombed in a real war within living memory, which definitely puts terrorist attacks into a less impressive category. So most Europeans, while they dislike terrorist attacks, do not obsess about them. They know that they are likelier to win the lottery than to be hurt by terrorists.

Russians are also pretty cool about the occasional terrorist attacks linked to the war in Chechnya, and Indians are positively heroic in their refusal (most of the time) to be panicked by terrorist attacks that have taken more lives there than all the attacks in the West since terrorist techniques first became widespread in the 1960s. In almost all of

these countries, despite the efforts of some governments to convince the population that terrorism is an existential threat of enormous size, the vast majority of the people don't believe it.

**IN THE UNITED STATES**, however, most people do believe it. A majority of Americans have finally figured out that the invasion of Iraq really had nothing to do with fighting terrorism, but they certainly have not understood that terrorism itself is only a minor threat. "We have a threat out there like we've never faced before," said actor, former senator and potential presidential candidate Fred Thompson last month—on Fox television, admittedly, but they wouldn't have called him a nutcase or laughed in his face on the other networks either.

"I don't think [Americans] realize that this has been something that's been going on for a few hundred years, and our enemies have another 100-year plan," Thompson continued. "Whether it's Madrid, whether it's London, whether it's places that most people have never heard of, they're methodically going around trying to undermine our allies and attack people in conventional ways, while they try to develop non-conventional ways, and get their hands on a nuclear capability, and ultimately to see a mushroom cloud over an American city."

There has been only one major terrorist attack in the United States since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and that one, on 9/11, is now almost six years in the past. So how have Ameri-

*An occasional terrorist attack is one of the costs of doing business in the modern world.*

cans been persuaded that their duty and their destiny in the 21st century is to lead the world in a titanic, globe-spanning "long war" against terrorism?

Inexperience is one reason: American cities have never been bombed in war, so Americans have no standard of comparison that would shrink terrorism to its true importance in the scale of threats that face any modern society. But the other is relentless official propaganda: the Bush administration has built its whole brand around the "war on terror" since 2001, so the threat must continue to be seen as huge and universal.

Ridiculous though it sounds to outsiders, Americans are regularly told that their survival as a free society depends on beating the "terrorists." They should treat those who say such things as fools or deliberate liars, but they don't. So the manipulators of public opinion in the White House and the more compliant sectors of the US media will give bigger play to the British bombings—that weren't than Britain's own government and media have, and they will get away with it.

*Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears regularly in Vue Weekly.*



 -gravity pope

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## RANDOM DISPATCH

DARRIN ZENKO  
dispatch@vancouverweekly.com

The callow little ballcapper barrels out of the doorway G'n R Liquor Store on 109th—the rockin'est liquor store in town: watch it bring you to your kna-na-na-na-na-knees, knees!—with the inertia of full hustle velocity times fireplug mass augmented by the heft of a case of Budweiser. Knocking into me slows his flight just long enough for the whistle to get blown:

"Hey! Hey! Your card did not go through!"

Busted. "Whut?"

"Your card did not go through!"

Sow confusion ninja smokebomb-style. "Whut? I don't know." Vague wave to somebody somewhere in the back of the store. "Fukkin' talk to that guy."

Escape foiled. When you're busted, you're busted. The kid shouldn't have stopped at the whistle and tried to throw the screen; without that momentum, there's no way he's gonna be able to ram his gym-doughy frame deep enough, fast enough into the densi-thronged Canada Day crowd to make a getaway. Lots of sullen what the fucks and a big show of angry money-flinging later, he clomps off with his well-gotten cans, a fistful of Lauriers lighter.

What is it with dudes not wanting (or being able) to pay for their booze tonight? Is all their liquid cash tied up in F-350s and muscle shirts? Not ten steps from the scene of the foiled lagerheist, a smiling, wobbling guy with a frosted fauxhawk and a slick silk shirt hits us up as we crowd-swim upstream against the fire-works-bound flow.

"Can any of you folks spare a couple bucks?"

Man! Come on! You're still dangling your iPod headphones in the hand you're holding out for money! It's one thing to liquidate your checking account, storm-drain it into getting wasted in celebration of peace, order and good government and end up staring over your crossed fingers

at INSUFFICIENT FUNDS, but the fact you've ended up on out on Ninth cadging toonies from strangers to clear your tab at Martini's means you weren't even partying with friends who would cover you. Pathetic, man—as my buddy put it, with his head hung in shame: "These are't hosers... they're lo-zers."

What's this country coming to?

"DJ CHAD PRESENTS O CHADADA DAY NO PANTY PARTY!"

Oh, right.

**A HUGE BLACK TRUCK** crawls through Jasper Avenue traffic, its engine roaring louder every inch by creeping inch, its windows rolled up because otherwise how would the plastic Canadian flags stay in? The feeling of willful, desperate mind-abandonment (Samuel Johnson by way of Hunter Thompson: "He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.") on the street is unprecedented in my experience. The mass is still the mass, and there's never been anything wrong with people howling and acting a little stupid, but there's a troubling screaming in the unending WHOOOOOOO that's not quite human...

The "Canada Day Riots" and the Orlarchy of last spring triggered an intense allergic response in the immune system of the city, the white cop cells. Their broad deployment and feverish response to antisocial (and especially anti-property) action keeps things contained, but I doubt they'll ever be able to ease up; there's too much inflammation now. The squinty-eyed dumbness is one wrong shove from danger.

The affronted lefty is that Edmonton's Young Manhood has been ruined by the spoiling effect of near-full employment, turned idiot by the boom—or maybe it's the drugs, or maybe all that violent rap music—or maybe more people are coming up who were never taught any god-damned manners, and who have been raised to view rudeness and ignorance as virtues. Whatever's happening, in combination with alcohol the effect is animal

CONTINUOUS ON NEXT PAGE

## Trust us, we're experts

**HEALTH** WELL, WELL, WELL  
CONNIE HOWARD  
health@vancouverweekly.com

It's hard to believe, but it turns out that some of our favourite fast-food staples and soft drinks are even worse for us than we thought. An expansive 12-year-long Finnish study has determined that the kind of sugar found in soft drinks is definitely associated with increased risk of type 2 diabetes, and that chicken fingers and fries (rather oddly, as they're not sweet) also put us at risk for diabetes.

While adults don't tend to live on fast food and soft drinks, many children and teens do. And many of them are developing diabetes and other degenerative diseases, things once thought to belong to the realm of the aging.

That's the tragedy. The surprise is that hardly anyone reacts to this news. I know, I know, once in a while won't hurt and all

that, and we all have to die of something but degenerative disease in the young?

The biggest surprise in all this, though, was a comment by dietician and *National Post* columnist Rosie Schwartz, who said that none of this means we should ban these foods from kids' diets. Really, Rosie? I wonder if she'd still be saying that if one of her children developed diabetes or arthritis by age 20. I wish more than anything, now, that I'd been more of a stickler about full-meal-deal chicken fingers regularly going into little bodies.

But what's the deal? Why are soft drinks worse than the old-fashioned use of sugar in, say, a cup of tea or on a bowl of unsweetened cereal? It's the higher fructose-glucose balance that's the culprit. Table sugar, also a fructose-glucose combo, but in a lower fructose ratio, didn't show a clear link, but the balances found in soft drinks did. The reason, of course, for the higher fructose ratio is extra sweetening and addiction power.

And what's so bad about chicken fingers and good old-fashioned fries? Food cooked at high temperatures (which means deep-fried anything) undergo chemical changes that make us less able to use insulin well, which means they also increase our risk of diabetes, along with our risk of heart disease, oxidative damage and inflammatory processes that lead to arthritis and Alzheimer's, which all simply means we age faster.

**SO WHILE WE'VE BEEN** thinking 40 will happily always be the new 30—while the experts have been assuring us that these foods aren't all that bad as long as they're not frequent regulars in our diets (which they can quickly become in our busy lives)—40 is rapidly becoming the new 50.

Then, still on the topic of trusting the experts' reassurances of safety, there's the childhood vaccine thing. It's harder on mom than on baby, the experts calmly

croon, but in the wake of 5000 claims of thimerosal-related injury in recent years in the US, it's time to stop and rethink our trust. No parent wants to risk negligence, and the official position of the science world on the thimerosal/autism link is that there is no link, but thousands of parents are clearly now convinced there is.

Thimerosal, which is 50 per cent mercury by weight, was until a few years ago used to preserve childhood vaccines. Classic symptoms of mercury poisoning include anxiety and cognitive and motor dysfunction, which sounds suspicious enough to me, and the fact that the preservative is no longer found in childhood vaccines makes it sound ever more suspicious. Why discontinue something if there truly is no problem? And why the prevalence of ADHD (linked to heavy metal toxicity), and why are alternative practitioners finding high levels of mercury in children who no longer receive mercury-amalgam fillings in their teeth?

And while I'm at the business of poking holes in official verdicts of safety, and given its relevance to the current discussion of nuclear power here in Alberta, one more little thing: radioactive materials from nuclear power plants being released into the Great Lakes are, according to a Greenpeace study, also much more dangerous than previously thought. Tritium (Canada's regulations around which are apparently laxer than elsewhere in the world) can become embedded in human cells once it binds with water, and can cause genetic mutations and cancer. It sounds like a horror movie to me, one with a familiar don't-you-worry-your-pretty-little-head script.

Absolute faith in the experts and ignorance is bliss, but we'll never get it right before it's too late if we don't start paying cynical attention and asserting ourselves. But then again, who has time for that when we're busy trying to figure out how to end (and pay for) the damage already done? ♥

Hyde beating the shit out of genial Jekyll in the heart of Edmonton hoserdom.

Yeah, listen to me getting old, in the ancient megaseasonal rite of one generation ripening toward the anti-whipper-snapper phase of its lifecycle. I just don't know how to fuckin' party. It's true; I had a better time in my parents' sunshine-and-flowers backyard, chatting

With a priest of my/acquaintance and watching the joy on my brother's face as he superman-flew his son through the sprinkler, than I'm having down here in the stereoboom with the howlers, screamers and text-messaging drunk drivers. Fit me for a walker and stick me in a home.

Post-fireworks in the lounge of the Hotel MacDonald, Blonde Redhead from the bar speakers blending with Celine Dion bleeding in from the ballroom next

door. I think it was a wedding... Is it ill-mannered to not know whether etiquette precludes Sunday weddings? Sipping on the second-least expensive red wine, I glance up at the Fathers of Confederation. What would they think of me? Their look makes me feel like a nose-picking caveman. They shake their heads at me across the generations:

"What's this country coming to? Nothing it hasn't come to seven or more times already..." ♡

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VUEWEEKLY

EDMONTON CHEFS 7/14

## Trail Mix

CYCLING A HIGH-PROTEIN PATH THROUGH EDMONTON'S EXURBS

JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vuenewweekly.com

When it comes to wheeled transportation, nothing grounds you in your environment like cycling. Unlike a car, you're in tune with the road, engaging the elements and absorbing the sights and sounds around you. If you're like me, you're also working up a good appetite.

During a near-ritual escape from the city one Saturday, I hopped on my bike with a vague plan to ride south of the city and sample the cuisine in the small communities of central Alberta. My pre-trip preparation involved a quick Mapquest search to scope out distances and the best secondary routes.

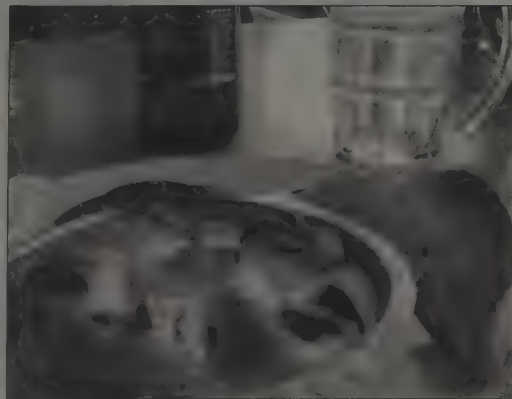
I settled on the Edmonton-Beaumont-Leduc-Devon loop, figuring that it offered a leisurely ride, a bit of adventure and some felicitous alliteration: breakfast in Beaumont, lunch in Leduc and dinner in Devon.

From southeast Edmonton (82nd Ave and 50th Street) to Devon, the entire distance was around 70 kilometres. The return trip to northwest Edmonton measured around 110 kilometres. I figured I'd get to Devon and decide from there whether to continue on to Edmonton or get picked up. I arranged for a standby ride, packed my cell phone, wallet and a Cliff bar in my two-litre Camelback, and hit the road.

Covering long distances on a bike doesn't require excessive training if you're moderately fit and allow enough travel time. I'd purposely selected a route that was doable for the average person, but I hadn't accounted for weather. As I rode along 50th Street, strong headwinds had me doubting whether I'd make it. The city street turned into provincial route 814 and the unconquerable grasslands stretched before me. I kept pedalling past red barns, antique tractors and nonchalant, cud-chewing cows. In just over an hour I covered the 20 kilometres to Beaumont.

**THE HIGH, SILVER STEEPLE** of St Vital Catholic church stood sentinel above the small town. The highway became the town's main street, and I rode slowly along, scanning for quaint breakfast nooks or coffee shops. There were few to be found.

Instead, I ended up at **Chateau on the Hill** (4904 50 Street), directly across from the church. Like I'd find at many small-town establishments, the mauve and cream interior was a throwback to the '80s. It was still early and the only other customers were 20 middle-aged men attending an evangelical men's breakfast. I listened to their heartfelt stories of sal-



## FOOD CYCLING

vation as I sifted through a breakfast menu of omelettes and waffles.

I chose the Spanish omelette (\$9.99), but it was more like a three-egg tortilla shell wrapped around a generous stuffing of ground beef, green pepper, tomato, salsa and melted cheddar, with helpings of fried potatoes and toast on the side. Even after ditching the sides, I was full before I finished the omelette. I couldn't resist. At \$12.71 with coffee and GST, it was the first in a large-portion, protein-fuelled day.

**I LEFT BEAUMONT** with renewed vigour and a full stomach. From the Chateau, the road leading south out of town begins abruptly with a long, steep descent—in other words, a perfect start. Soon I rediscovered my stamina and settled into a regular stride.

The ride between Beaumont and Leduc along secondary route 814 featured more scenic pastures until the turn on to route 623. Here, in a Ducks Unlimited Canada conservation plot, sun reflected off a blue lake as wind rustled the marshes. Just past the lake, I climbed the first daunting hill of my trip. My legs worked like pistons. With my newfound energy, I was in Leduc before I knew it; another 22 kilometres had passed in an hour and a half. Once in town, a well laid-out network of bike trails made it easy to avoid busy roads.

While Leduc is the biggest of the three towns and offered more restaurants, the options were limited mostly to chain establishments and steak

joints. This seemed to be the case in all three towns, but with local recommendations, it is possible to unearth the gems among the generic fare. In Leduc, this was **Kosmo's Restaurant** (5011 - 50 Avenue).

Despite the restaurant's stereotypically Greek name, neither the menu nor atmosphere was Greek: it looked like an ABC Country Restaurant. Aside from the liver and onions—a seemingly ubiquitous dish on local menus—their offerings included appetizers like escargots bourguignon (\$7.95) and mains like chicken parmesan (\$10.95). I ordered both, with a bottle of Keith's (\$5.25) to accompany the meal.

The escargots were bobbing in garlic butter and herbs underneath a baked blanket of cheese. The chicken—which came with a side salad, potatoes and garlic bread—was juicy and tender, giving way easily under my fork. My only complaints were the excessive use of cheese on both dishes, and the sauce that overpowered the chicken. By moderating cheese and sauce, I savoured both dishes and avoided getting stuffed by yet more monstrous portions, all for \$27.67 with GST.

**THE PREDOMINANTLY FLAT** stretch from Leduc to Devon (provincial route 39 to Highway 60 North) enables cyclists to build up momentum and enjoy the whirring song of tire on pavement. Hypnotized by the rhythm, I maintained a strong but easy pace as I churned up the next 24 kilometres to Devon in under two hours.

I rode into town around 3 pm, hot and tired. I'd covered 66 kilometres so far. I turned right onto Erie Street and

EDMONTON CHEFS 7/14

# Some original ideas for your summer beer quaffing

## SUDS! GREAT HEAD

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Beer is made for summer. Hot, sunny days deserve back decks and weekends at the lake. It's no surprise that beer companies push the link between summer pursuits and their products. Summer deserves beer like beaches deserve bikinis. The hot summer months account for 65 per cent of all beer sales.

It's disheartening, however, that the same old watery, American knock-offs are flying off the store shelves. This no-taste, fizzy brew is best consumed ice cold in large quantities. Edmontonians can do better.

There is quality beer out there that will suit your summertime beer-drinking needs. Firstly, acknowledge that in the summer, just like with food, our beer tastes change. We want something lighter in body, which quenches thirst and won't sit heavily in the stomach. We need a beer that can be served colder. We also need to be able to drink more than a couple without falling off the dock.

My first suggestion is only a short hop from standard pale lagers. **Warsteiner Premium Lager** (\$14.25 for six) is Germany's biggest selling beer, straddling the pale lager and pilsner styles. It is a bright pale yellow with a rather thin aroma of light graininess and a hint of hop.

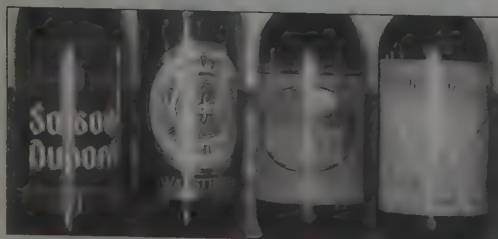
The light, crisp Warsteiner holds a malt sweetness, but it is subdued. It hides behind a dry cleanliness. The beer finishes crisply and the aftertaste lingers with a low, hop bitterness which isn't found in regular lager. Its overall impression is refreshing and well suited for a hot day.

During the summer months, we want to let loose a little. That applies to beer (and beer geeks) as well. **Tree Brewing's Thirsty Beaver** (\$12.50 for six) is a let-loose kind of beer. On its own merits, it is unassuming and rather boring, but put it in a fresh glass on a sunny patio and it improves immensely. This amber ale is made for summer quaffing.

The aroma has an enticing caramel and nutty sweetness, backed by a touch of hop. It is a light copper colour with an under-performing white head. The attraction of this beer is its blend of malt and hop. At the front, it offers a nutty and rounded malt akin to a brown ale. At the back end, a leafy bitterness jumps in to cut the sweetness and dry out the beer. It is not a bitter beer, but just enough hops sharpen the palate.

For the true beer lover this summer, Edmonton has its own home-grown version of a German summer specialty. Alley Kat has a kristalweizen (a clear wheat beer) that owner and brewmaster Neil Herbst has aptly called **Herbstweizen** (\$11.50 for six). The regular German wheat beer, hefeweizen, is a cloudy, bold beer which is refreshing in its own right. Kristalweizen is the same beer filtered to remove the haze and soften the flavours.

Herbstweizen pours a medium gold with bright clarity. It has almost no head, only offering a thin white ring on the side



of the glass. The predominant aromas are of banana and clove, in fairly equal proportions. These come from the unique German yeast, which produces esters during fermentation. Underneath the esters is a solid malt sweetness.

The flavour's first impression is a dance of fruity and spicy esters; again banana and clove dominate, but hints of berry come through. The bedrock of the beer is an understated but solid malt character: out of the wheat and barley, the barley comes through most clearly. The beer could use more wheat, which might have been lost in filtration. Wheat does, however, make its presence known in the after-taste, lingering as a soft drying note.

Herbstweizen nicely meets the rounded quality of the style, and will provide a pleasant pint for anyone who wishes to partake.

What might be the most unusual summer beer on liquor store shelves is the premiere version of an odd Franco-Belgian style, **Saison Dupont** (\$14.50 for four 330mL bottles). Saisons are known as "farmhouse ales" for their historical ties and unusual flavour.

Saison Dupont pours a thick, hazy orange-gold with a stunning, mountainous white head that lasts long past the last sip. The aroma is earthy and dusty with a touch of rounded hop. The first sip may surprise the uninitiated.

A Dupont is fruity, musty and wonderfully complex. The delicate pear and apple provide a sweet base. The musty, earthy tone may take some getting used to, but brings out the beer's nature. It is both exotic and grounded, evoking images of rustic European cottages on a small plot of land.

Its finish offers a deft touch of soft bitterness, but only in the background. The earthy note lingers after the swallow, as does a light smokiness. Despite the complex flavours, the light-bodied beer cleans the palate with a sharp finish, erases thirst and leaves you wanting another.

Beer is created for summer, but not all beer is created equal. Respect your beer money and experiment with the summer beers that deserve your loonies and backyard leisure time. You won't regret it. ♡

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# Chefapalooza

EDMONTON'S BESTEST CHEFS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT — YET

TAMIS McLEOD / [tamis@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:tamis@vancouverweekly.com)

Edmonton has some amazing names on the culinary scene — names that can make a particular restaurant your favourite place. But while the executive chef is gallivanting through the rainforests of Peru in search of that elusive new dish, who runs their kitchen? While the head chef is off to the farmer's market, who prepares the *vol-au-vent*?

At *Characters*, that person is Sous Chef James McKinnon. McKinnon began his career serving in a local lounge after leaving university in search of something more to his taste. He moved from serving to working line positions in a number of Edmonton eateries before becoming a sous chef at Sorrentino's, and then running the kitchen at the Northern Bear Golf Course. Four years ago, he was looking for the opportunity to move into a formal dining environment and was attracted by *Characters*' reputation.

## FOOD CHEFS

Today, McKinnon is responsible for the evening operation of *Characters*' kitchen, including ordering supplies, ensuring the quality of the food, hiring staff, maintaining morale and solving any problems that arise. McKinnon is a quiet man, not particularly comfortable talking about himself, but he becomes animated when discussing his work.

"Sometimes I come in on a Sunday, when the restaurant is closed, just to play and create," he admits.

IN HIS CURRENT ROLE, McKinnon has learned a lot about managing a restaurant and staff relations. He likes that *Characters* is what he calls kitchen-driven, but has learned that it's important to build teamwork and coordination between the front and the back of the house.

Something else McKinnon has learned at *Characters* is how to work in an open kitchen. Working in full view is a double-edged sword.

"You have to watch what you say and do when you get frustrated," he says. But one of his greatest satisfactions is when customers approach him to tell him how much they enjoyed their meal.

McKinnon has experienced tremendous success as a chef, even though he hasn't had any formal training.

"My hands-on training has been excellent, and I make a point of learning from other employees who have had formal training," he explains. McKinnon credits a previous employee who trained in Montreal with teaching him a few tricks on preparing sushi. As a result, he's added some of his own flair to the restaurant's sushi appetizer, to make it a more sophisticated dish.

"At a certain point, going to school became redundant," says McKinnon. He has thought about heading off to Europe for a little extra training, not

because he feels there's a hole in his skills, but because he would like to be exposed to some of that famous "old world" technique. Working under Shonn Oborowsky, the restaurant's owner and culinary lead, McKinnon feels he has become a better all-around chef.

Four years could be considered a long time to stay in one place, especially with the high density of restaurants in Edmonton. But McKinnon sees *Characters* as his last stop before reaching for his dream: a restaurant of his own.

CORY WELSH WOULDN'T mind having a restaurant of his own, either. But he's also pretty happy as Sous Chef at *Hardware Grill*. Welsh started there in 2002 and has worked his way up from preparing vegetables and starches to running the kitchen at night while cooking the meats. He doesn't see any particular dish as his own, but after five years and cooking hundreds and hundreds of meals, "they feel like they're all your own," says Welsh. "They feel like your children."

Welsh has also learned about the business aspects of running a restaurant and has gained first-hand experience in handling staff and solving problems. When asked about the most valuable knowledge he's gained at *Hardware Grill*, he replies that it's Head Chef Larry Stewart's organization. For example, the shelves in the refrigerator are labelled, and food items are always stored in the same place. It's the simple things that save so much time.

At 26, Welsh might be considered young to be in a key role in one of Edmonton's busiest restaurants. But he began cooking at a Kelsey's restaurant at 17. Welsh then joined his brother as a chef at the Shaw Conference Centre before enrolling in NAIT's Culinary Arts program. Summers, and he was a chef at British Columbia's prestigious Fairmont Hot Springs Hotel.

ENTREPRENEURS ON WEEKLY PAGE



# GRAB AND GRILL

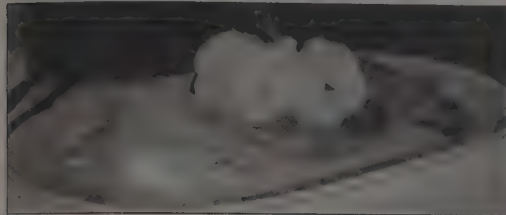
Feel like tandoori chicken tonight? How about enchiladas or cornmeal-crusted tilapia? Swing by the Specials Page on Dinner Revolution's newly redesigned website and find out what's for dinner. When you don't really feel like spending hours in the kitchen, forget raiding the fridge and preparing the meal. Pick up one of Janna Rausch-Ferguson's meals in a freezer bag and throw it on the grill

for a nutritious, easy and inexpensive way to feed the hordes. Visit dinnerrevolution.com for more info.

## "COULD YOU TELL ME WHICH WINE TO PICK?"

Because they are asked for recommendations so often, the staff at Bin 104 decided to hold their own wine tasting. On July 11, each staffer will address their own wine and tell you why it is a personal favourite. For only \$30 a person, this customer-friendly tasting is sure to sell out fast. Visit [bin104.com](http://bin104.com) for details.

*Dish Weekly spills the beans on culinary happenings around town. Got an event, an announcement or some substantiated gossip? Email [dish@vuwweekly.com](mailto:dish@vuwweekly.com) or fax 426.2889.*



We asked some of Edmonton's greatest up-and-coming culinary superstars to craft some of their greatest dishes. Here is what they offered:

### Janna McKinnon, Characters

Duck breast with raspberry jus, duck leg confit with buttered peaches on a bed of cassoulet with fried plantain and rosemary.

Hamhock ravioli with baby carrots,

maple-glazed pork belly, pork tenderloin with three-mustard dill sauce, garnished with rosemary and dehydrated apple chips

### Cory Welsh, Hardware Grill

Smoked salmon with truffle potato perogies in a mustard cream sauce with salmon roe caviar.

Bison carpaccio with an oyster mushroom salad, chèvre noir cheese and a micro greens salad with potato straws.

## CHEFALOOZA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Welsh recalls that he was literally thrust into the sous chef position at Overtime. The head chef was also running the kitchen at River City Chop House. When he needed to leave someone in charge at Overtime, he chose Welsh, who was proving his strength as a cook.

Welsh then moved on to Hardware Grill, where he must adhere to the highest standards and consistently

deliver high-quality meals. "Many of our diners are here to celebrate a special occasion," explains Welsh. "So it's crucial that their meal is exceptional."

Like Characters, Hardware Grill has an open kitchen, which Welsh says makes him care more about the diners' experience. At his station, he is often only a few feet away from customers and feels great pleasure in seeing them enjoy their meals. Both McKinnon and Welsh agree that the work of a sous chef is hard, but ultimately the connection to the customer makes it worthwhile. ♥

## EXURBAN DINING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

found relief at the shady, air-conditioned **Marci's Bar and Grill** (102 Erie Street). It was still a little early for my planned dinner, so I loosened my cleats, ordered a beer and debated whether to keep going.

Eventually I got hungry and ordered the lemon pepper salmon (\$15.95) mated with a glass of Ernest and Julio's whitest (\$4.95). The grilled fish with peppery accents blended with the gingery, oak hints of the wine, transporting me from prairie heat to spring comfort on the Mediterranean. Marci's more moderate portions made for a lighter meal, but I still left half a side of rice unfinished. In all, it came

to \$26.91 with GST.

The sun was still hot but the winds were at my back now. Encouraged by the increasing ease of the trip, I decided to press on as far as I could. I cleared town quickly and dipped down into the North Saskatchewan River valley just north of town on Highway 60.

The climb up the hill on the other side was the toughest of the day, but I powered through it unfazed. After that, it was smooth sailing past the Devonian Gardens and on to Highway 16A. I set a steady, aggressive pace back to town, covering the last 40 kilometres in less than two hours to arrive in Edmonton just after 6 pm, having eaten up over 100 prairie kilometres and likely many, many more calories of hearty, high-protein, prairie small town goodness. ♥

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# THE BESTEST OF EDMONTON

URNS OUT DEADMONTON IS ANYTHING BUT (WELL, MOST OF THE TIME)

VUE STAFF

**I**t was the bestest of times, it was the worstest of times. While compiling our fifth annual compilation of what makes our humble City of Champions the bestest place to be, our writers gushed about the natural beauty of the river valley, raged against the vagaries of our economic boom, lauded our local festivals and cultural institutions and, of course, bitched about the Oilers.

This isn't about cheerleading for local businesses or cataloguing Edmonton's "funkiness" or anything like that. Consider this our cadre of freelance contributors' giant love note to an old friend. Yeah, sometimes he parties a little hard, and all this money he just came into is kind of going to his head, but we love the big lunk as much as we always did, because, well, he's the bestest. Turn the page to find out why.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES GRASDAL

**Contributors:** Bryan Birtles (BB), Brian Gibson (BG), Ella Jameson (EJ), Joel Kelly (JK), Sherry Dawn Knettle (SK), Alex Koyne (AK), Tanis McLeod (TM), Eden Munro (EM), Carolyn Nikodym (CN), Mary Christa O'Keefe (MCO), Joel Semchuk (JS), Murray Sinclair (MS), Darren Zenko (DZ)



# BESTEST THING TO HAPPEN TO JASPER AVENUE

Nope, I'm not talking about Oil City Road House (which quite frankly scares me). And I am not even talking about the long-awaited revitalization of deadened buildings. I am talking about Make it Not Suck, the guerrilla art project that has graced—however briefly—the construction barricades at 104th Street and 108th Street. Seeing these works—challenging our definition of art space—made me proud to be from Edmonton. (CN)

# BESTEST LATTE ART

Edmonton needs all the help it can get in the war against shitty coffee currently being waged on its streets—if I hear one more person walk into a java joint and order a "moolatté with cool whip," I'm going to stick my hand in a burr grinder. Luckily, a smattering of independent cafés have risen up in response, and caffeine-snobbs like me can get their fix—if they're willing to look for it. My current favourite is the Three Bananas Café, located right on Churchill Square. If you order one of their lattes or cappuccinos, you'll instead receive a thing of beauty, constructed out of foam and milk and espresso. Plus, they use fair-trade coffee that is actually delicious (sadly, still a rarity here). (JK)

# BESTEST PUBLIC ART

Part of Make it Not Suck on Jasper Ave and 108th is a mural of Howie Mandel and our Mayor Steven Mandel in their boxer shorts amorously screaming "Deal! Deal! Deal!" I may not know art, but I know what I like. (JQ)

# BESTEST PLACE IN TOWN FOR A CHEAP, DRUG- AND ALCOHOL-FREE ATTACK ON THE SENSES

On a stifling summer night, go down to the legislature grounds and gaze into any of the light-polluting sodium lamps. Stare down that sucker until you're pretty sure you've exhausted the receptors in your retinas—sorta like snow blindness—and bingo! Jump into the wading pool and splash around as needed. The cool of the water shocking you in the heat, mixed with your washed-out vision makes for some interesting sensory cross-

talk. Spin around a bit and goof-up your inner ear too! (AK)

# BESTEST COMIC SHOP

The shelves at Happy Harbor at Manning Crossing bear pretty much the nerd-store standard stock of comics, manga geek-books and vinyl tchotchkes, but Happy Harbor competes on atmosphere. I was in there killing time while I waited for my ride after a wisdom-tooth extraction, and the staff were all "Have a seat!", directing me to a couple of comfy chairs, encouraging me to sit and read. A refreshing reversal of the police-state customer-is-the-enemy approach of some other shops. (DZ)

# BESTEST PLACE TO GO WINDOW-SHOPPING FOR HOUSES

North of 102nd Avenue around 128th Street are some of the oldest, grandest and most spectacular houses in Edmonton. Even the new houses going up manage to retain some of the splendor and architectural inspiration of Edmonton's heyday. The trees are huge, and it's not surprising to come across the odd three-car garage around here, along with vaulted roofs, mansion-style spreads and intricate brickwork in every way a house can be big. Sure, it might make your 600-square foot condo seem inadequate, but it's a great place to go walking. (JS)

# BESTEST BUSINESS SIGN

There's a sign to the northeast of Fort Saskatchewan at the junction of Highway 15 Highway 29 that reads "Inspirational Taxidermy Services." If they're stuffing monks there, I've got to get myself one for the rec room. I'm a little worried about going out there, though, because it's down a road marked "No Exit" and that's never a good sign when taxidermists are involved. (EM)

# BESTEST WAY TO TELL YOUR PARTNER YOU GOT A PHOTO RADAR SPEEDING TICKET

Circle this and leave it out for your sweetie to see. (SK)

# BESTEST VIEW OF DOWNTOWN FROM THE SOUTHSIDE

The Duggan Bridge, on Saskatchewan Drive near 107th Street, offers a post-

card look at Edmonton's core, framed by the Legislature to the west, Telus Field to the east, treetops below swarming into the river valley, and that sprawling Alberta sky above. (BG)

# BESTEST PLACE IN TOWN TO READ LIKE YOU'RE AT THE BEACH

Until I win the 6/49 megamillions



# BESTEST PLACE TO STRUT YOUR SLUTTIEST SELF

If you need to lie down to zip up your skinniest skinny jeans with a coat hanger and like to count the change in your sweetie's pocket with just a quick glance, then put on your tightest/shortest shirt and get yourself down to Capital Ex. Like Klondike Days before it, the Ex is a place where skanky hormones just ooze out of bared midriffs and muscle shirts. (CN)

and build a beach and wave pool right in town, I'll settle for any bench on 100th Avenue overlooking Victoria Park Road. And with the right set of ears, the combination of cars whizzing by and the overgrown grass along the hill rustling in the wind sounds very much like waves crashing along a vast shoreline. Complete the illusion by bringing a battery-powered misting fan to simulate sea spray, maybe an iPod loaded up with sea bird calls and an Ian Rankin potboiler for a fun read. (AK)

**BESTEST VIEW OF SASKATCHEWAN** I've always said that Edmonton is probably the only large city where you can see downtown from the west end—this part of Alberta's geography is that flat. In fact, there's a spot on the northeast side of the city where you've got a practically unrestricted view of Saskatchewan.

Overlooking 50th Street just north of 144th Avenue is an open field. Whenever I am there, I find my gaze drifting off to the distant horizon. Past the refineries. Past Sherwood Park. Past that giant egg. I can practically count the spots on cows grazing in the fields of that other flat, flat

province. Forget the view of towering mountain peaks to the west. I prefer looking east. (TM)

# BESTEST EXAMPLE OF EDMONTON BUREAUCRACY

Getting rid of all of the city's bike racks in the middle of Bike Month. I hope they don't arrest the drug dealers just before Folk Fest. (BB)

# BESTEST CEMETERY

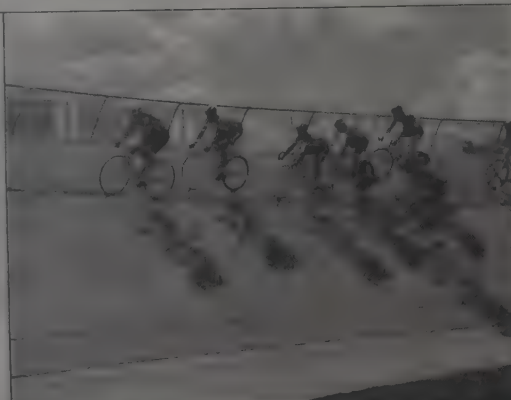
As one of Edmonton's only true natural hills (as opposed to mere slopes), of course Mount Pleasant would be used as a burial ground. "Cemetery Hill" makes for a nice stroll, reading the lives and currents of the city and its people in some of our oldest grave-makers. Scavenger hunt: can you find the monument to a rockin' guy, etched with a fittingly rockin' Gibson Flying V guitar? (BG)

# BESTEST (OTHER) PARK

Let's face it—Hawrelak park is the Britney Spears of Edmonton's sunniet set. Between the swaths of summer sporting and the procession of pimp-mobiles, it's no place to get away and, say, fill in a farmer's tan. And you

# BESTEST PLACE TO TEST YOUR SENSE OF BALANCE

For five bucks the staff at the Argyll Velodrome will put you on a track bike and send you spinning round the track at lightning speed. Essentially a big oval cement pad set at a thirty-three degree slope, it takes skill to maneuver on its seven-meter wide track. Balance, endurance and nerves are all tested as you realize these two wheels come with only one gear and no brakes. (EJ)



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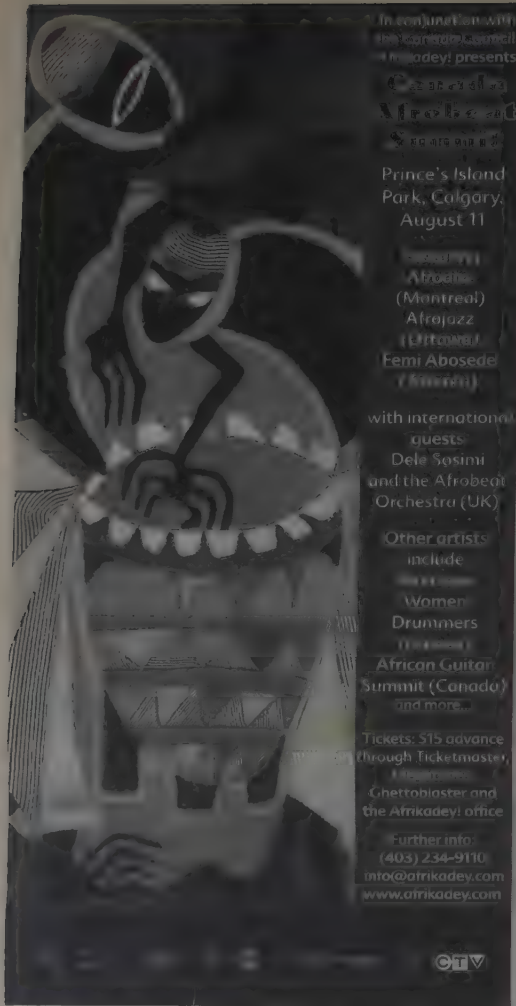
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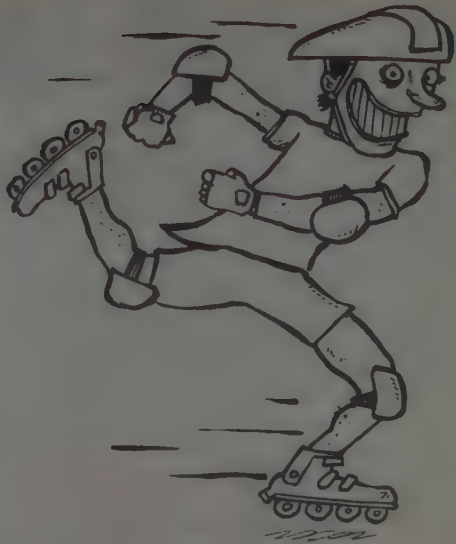
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# ★★ THE BESTEST OF EDMONTON ★★



## BESTEST PAVEMENT

A few years ago the City re-did the sidewalks between 72nd and 75th Avenues and 91st to 95th Street in a creamy surface with a curve at the curb. This means smooth sailing for all you inline skaters out there; you could jump from the street to the sidewalk over a soft patch of grass and the trees are nice to blade under in any season just as the houses are old-school and well-kept. There's the river valley right there too, with a bike and blading path that runs past Mill Creek. And for those of you wanting a challenge, the completely unrepaired 99th Street isn't far off. (JS)

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

can't even go into the water. Not far away (by car or bike or even long summer walk standards) is Paul Kane Park, just north of Jasper Avenue on 122nd Street. Small, but secluded and quiet, Paul Kane has enough space to tan or casually throw a Frisbee, a wading pool you can cool off in and even a playground for the kids. It's a perfect summer hang-out alternative. (JS)

## BESTEST SCHOOL FIELDS

They call it "Mount Pleasant Park," between 105 and 106 at 60A Avenue, but I say teeny-weeny Mount Pleasant School has any kid's (especially a

hopeful young Beckham-bender) dream for school fields. Three soccer fields and plenty more grass around it, splashed out in rolling greenery on all sides, stretching for blocks... it's as if a city planner finally said, "Hey, there's lots of grass around—let's leave it and tuck the brick and concrete into a little school off on the corner." (BG)

## BESTEST THING ABOUT THIS SUMMER

Not having all of my money spent on beer, t-shirts, car flags, other intoxicants, pizza, outrageously priced tickets and other things that went along with last year's Stanley Cup run and left me penniless by early June. Look, I love hockey as much as the next

guy, but I just couldn't have survived not eating for two summers in a row. And the lack of high diving has left my skin baby soft. (BB)

## BESTEST VIDEO ARCADE

None. There aren't any in this town anymore, and theatre lobbies don't count. Depressing. (DZ)

## BESTEST CAR WASH POSTER

A vintage carwash ad trumpeting "the best handjob in town" found hanging at a modern wash in the city recalls the time when the term simply meant washing vehicles by hand. Those not familiar with the more modern meaning can type the term in an Internet search engine. Putting in "hand job

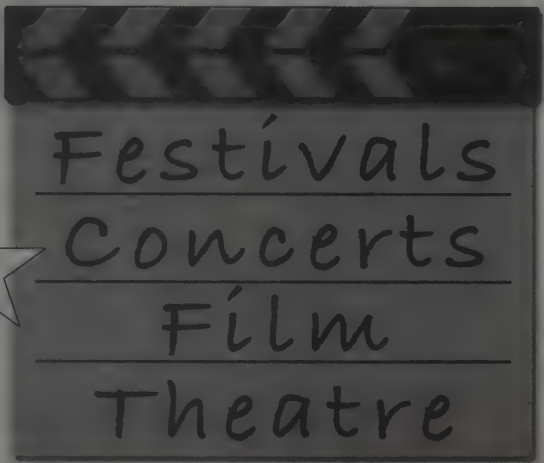
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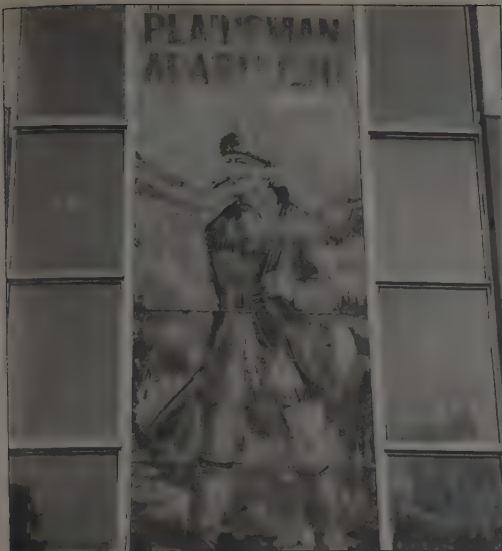
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### BESTEST MYSTERY MURAL

Wondering what a faded, oversized mural is doing on an old apartment, on 107th Avenue 110th Street, is only the first question. Why is a mountain scene depicted if the apartment is called the "Plainsman?" Did the man's carried weaponry discourage anyone from making any jokes about his purse? Building manager Barb Workman believes the Plainsman was once an old motel, with the mural related to the business name. An employee with the apartment's managing company, who didn't want to be named, did not know anything about the building's age or origins, or why the mural was put up. She agreed with Workman that the mural serves as a giant identifier, especially for people looking for the building. "People have said that it's unique, and that it's not often that you see that," she said. (MS)

carwash" gives you a mix of porn and other pics, compiled on post-your-photo websites, of carwash commercial signs that were, uh, erected in another era. On another site, the photographed poster is seen put on dirty-joke T-shirts for sale, modeled by blondes and brunettes wearing little else. (MS)

### BESTEST QUICK WALKING TOUR OF EDMONTON (NORTH OF THE RIVER) FOR SOMEBODY WHO LOVES TO WALK FAST

This is quick, but bear in mind that my young out-of-town guest and I share the family genes for walking fast. We parked at the bus depot one sunny summer morning around 10:30 and were back in time for him to take the 12:30 Greyhound to Jasper. Start with a walk through City Hall. Go through Churchill Square—if you're lucky,

there will be a lively event such as the Street Performers' Festival or the Works or the Jazz Festival. Head to Canada Place (do they still call it that?) and across to the Convention Centre (what's it called now?). Take the escalator down to the lower level, all the while admiring the beautiful view of the river valley. Walk east about a half kilometre to the footbridge that leads to Muttart Conservatory (I think that's what it's still called). You can take a quick look into all four pavilions, but why bother? Head back to the bus depot and apologize profusely for not taking him to see Wayne Gretzky's statue at (oh, isn't it called Rexall Place which I know this one... used to be called the Coliseum, right?). (SK)

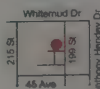
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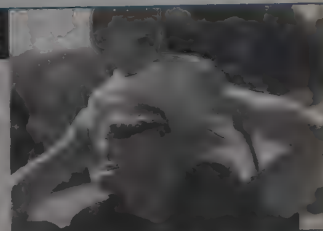


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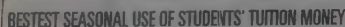


Tell them you live in the burbs so you don't know all the details about why Northlands Coliseum is now Rexall Place but used to be called something else as well. The Convention Centre now has another name (but I don't know what it is), and there are four different names for what was once called Highway 2, and Galaxyland was once called Fantasyland but Disneyland didn't like that so West End Mall had to change the name or they'd be sued. There's no good way of explaining the reasons for every name change, but if you can rattle off at least a few of the names or reasons, your guests will get the idea.

(SK)

Man, forget WEM. Let your out-of-town visitors deal with that hellhole on their own, if they must. When the weather's good—or even if it's a bit shitty—Fort Edmonton Park, one of the world's greatest "living museums," is the most impressive attraction in town. Make sure you get a schedule of the many daily events, so you don't miss something cool (or some free food). (DZ)

Fear not, city driver—your Honda Civic can handle the gravel roads. On Highway 62 south of Drayton Valley, turn south on Range Road 81 and follow it to the end down the hill. Then a small walk puts you in the most accessible piece of Crown land east of Jasper. It's an old gravel pit, but it's along a stretch of the North Saskatchewan River and behind that the ground's sandy enough to pitch a tent. There's an ATV path that follows



The University of Alberta has added more water gardens to the campus this year, slipping some much-needed oases of nature (and midday lunch spots) amid all the parking lots, '60s concrete buildings and construction on campus. (BG)



I know that some folks will disagree because there is plenty of it in the River Valley, but just east of Riverdale and west of Epcor's Rosedale Water Treatment Plant, there's this hair-raising stretch of single-track that clings to the side of a hill. And when it's all grown in, all you can do is pedal and hope for the best. (CN)

[illegible]



the river, perfect for hiking as well. There's no better place to bask in the wonderful lull of unspoiled land, far away from everything. (JS)

#### BESTEST DRIVE AROUND METRO EDMONTON

The best local drive is more an atmospheric and anticipatory jaunt to lake country—namely Wabamun. The 15- to 20-minute, high-speed, radical torque escapade via Escalade is the perfect cure for what ails you. Granted, the drive is nothing special, but that feeling of escape from your shit job and nagging commitments is so powerful it makes you forget that you're but a frantic cell phone call away from some snafu down at the office. And of course this closeness works to your advantage coming home; instead of four hours towing a speedboat, you have the same 20-minute burn back into town. (AK)

#### BESTEST INVASIVE SPECIES NOT FOUND IN EDMONTON

Ever see any black squirrels around Edmonton? No? That's because you're not supposed to. It's an Eastern Canadian species—there are loads of them out there, but none here. Well, except in Calgary, where a few of them have escaped from the zoo and started pushing the smaller red squirrels out of their natural habitat—running them out of town Old West-style, essentially. That's not too far away from the beginnings of Planet of the Apes—the orangutans started picking on the chimps and then all hell broke loose. I'll just say that I'm sure happy that it's happening in Calgary. We'll see how those Flames do next year when they've got black squirrels clawing at their eyeballs. (EM)

#### BESTEST HIKE IN EDMONTON

Until we start developing our landfills to the point where we can enjoy world class downhill skiing and uphill hiking/climbing, we'll have to settle

for our environs. This "bestest" requires a little absent-mindedness on your part, initially, but when you finally get it, you have a work-out as good as any touristy trek in Jasper or Banff. Basically, you have to get fed up with the slow elevator service in, say, the Allstream tower downtown. You decide to take the stairs, forgetting that every door, on every floor, is locked in an effort to curb hooliganism, rape and smoking in the stairwells. Bingo! You have your hike to the twentieth floor and back. (AK)

#### BESTEST PLACE TO SEE LOCAL BANDS

Despite enjoying a bumper crop of awesome bands in recent years, Edmonton's music scene has suffered of late due to a lack of venues for upcoming bands to strut their stuff. Calgary, on the other hand, has oodles of awesome venues and an audience receptive to Edmonton's many talents. And, if you do make a roadtrip down south to catch your favourite band, you can also enjoy the Calgary zoo while you're down there! Who doesn't love their hippopotamus exhibit? Isn't it time we put petty rivalries aside? (JK)

#### BESTEST ACOUSTICS

This a trick category, because you think it's got to be a local venue with many watts of power and baffles and insulation in the walls and such, but you'd be wrong and you'd come off sounding like a nerd and/or self-flagellator trying to refute it. Another clear answer might seem to be the river valley, with its lush, verdant channels, but you'd be wrong there too. But the best acoustics in town are actually downtown in the avenues between 99th and Jasper Avenues and the streets between 116th and 110th Streets. These corridors lend themselves to reverberation with very little feedback. I suggest a low-key concert with Diana Krall or maybe Amon



#### BESTEST DISSOCIATING VISTA

There are many places to see the contrast of Edmonton's natural beauty, idyllic river valley and tight-knit community feel with the industrial ugliness and belching smokestacks of Refinery Row. Watch from the Highlands, Beverley and Rundle Heights neighbourhoods, and imagine how blue-collar Edmonton viewed the big behemoth across the river in the 1950s. Sit in the publicly funded Rundle and Capilano parks, and ponder how petro-dollar tax revenue from the industrial park right next door improves Alberta's quality of life. Hang out in the Abbotsfield Mall parking lot at night and observe the chemical Christmas trees glow in the distance. Gaze towards Edmonton's city skyline behind the refineries from Sherwood Park, and you'll feel like you're in a suburban mock-coziness scene right out of Simpsons (with the petro complex replacing the nuclear power plant). But the best contrasts can be seen where the old industrial complex rubs right up against neighbourhoods like Gold Bar and Ottewell, where the smokestacks can be seen sticking out on a park's horizon. (MS)

Tobin for all the lucky condo-denzens in that neck of the woods. (AK)

#### BESTEST ROAD

The stretch of 76th Avenue between 86th and 95th streets will be open again in a couple of weeks, but right

now this stretch, closed for construction of a retaining wall, makes for a peaceful, eerie stroll as it swoops into the trees to cross Mill Creek. Pretend it's after the Gasoline Crash, and the traffic barricades are post-apocalyptic militia checkpoints! (DZ)

**BESTEST INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY** . Start printing those "Lord Give me Another Oil Boom... I Promise I Won't Piss It Away this Time" bumper stickers and sit back and wait. (BB)

CONTINUES ON PAGE 23



#### BESTEST PLACE TO CONTEMPLATE THE COST OF WAR

Corporal Ainsworth Dyer was killed by "friendly fire" in April 2002 in Afghanistan along with comrades Sergeant Marc Léger, Private Richard Green and Private Nathan Lloyd Smith. Eight other Canadian soldiers with the PPCLI were injured in the incident. The Ainsworth Dyer Memorial Bridge crosses the North Saskatchewan River connecting Goldbar Park to Rundle Park, and serves as a reminder to those lives lost in war-torn Afghanistan. The scene of his wedding proposal to fiancée Jocelyn Van Sloten, the bridge was renamed in his honor in 2003 and remains a place for reflection. (E)

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# Bestest of Edmonton: Great Outdoors edition!

Any compilation of Edmonton awesomeness would be woefully incomplete if it didn't acknowledge all the fun to be had in our city's sunny, green, un-air conditioned spaces. As such, this year we've enlisted the writers of *Vue's* Great Outdoors section to add their two bits to our annual Bestest issue. So put down that paper and get out there! (well, uh, after you read this, of course!)

**Contributors:** Bobbi Barbarich (BB), Jeremy Derkson (JD), Cayley Leighton (CL), Sheena Rossiter (SR), Christie Schultz (CS)

## CRAZIEST RIVER VALLEY BIKE TRAIL

Littered with narrow, steep, single-track descents and unforgiving obstacles (like roots, trees and drop-offs), the "Ewok Village" just below McNally High School is the most technical riding I've found in several years of biking both the north and south banks between the Valley Zoo and Goldbar. Dense foliage shades the trails and plays tricks with the light. Potholes and tight turns jump out at you from all sides. More advanced riders may have their own sweet spots, but for the moderate rider the interlacing paths and steep spines traversing this tree-covered hill are as technical as it gets. (JD)

## BESTEST DRESSED RUNNERS IN TOWN

Edmonton's Hash House Harriers ([www.eh3.org](http://www.eh3.org)) call themselves a drinking club with a running problem, but their fetish for wearing red dresses while running is what attracts the most attention. Over 200 men and women in red finery usually partake in the annual Red Dress Run. Their excuse is that they wear the dresses to raise funds for charitable causes (this year's beneficiary was Bosco Homes) but *Vue* suspects that they just enjoy the feeling of their frocks blowing in the breeze as they run. (JD)

## BESTEST WAY TO MAKE YOURSELF PINK WHILE RUNNING

Edmonton boasts the biggest urban green space in North America. But if you're bored of biking and pounding the pavement's getting old, why not bust your ass up the bestest stairs? Over 100 wood and gravel staircases throughout the valley await your masochistic pleasure. Try this route: warm up with two sets of shallow staircases totalling 172 m near 71st Street and Ada Boulevard. Continue down the paved path to 78th Street and 112th Avenue. It's a laborious 118 m trip up the third longest staircase in the river valley, but there's a beautiful view of downtown at the top.

## BESTEST WAY TO GO CANOEING WITHOUT A CANOE

Even when you have your very own perfect red canoe, river trips still involve the somewhat annoying business of shuttling yourself, your canoe and your vehicle. And what's a girl to do if she wants to share her love of paddling with those who don't have their own? Renting from local shops is great for longer trips, but for the half-day trip from Devon to Edmonton, Canoeheads ([www.canoeheads.com](http://www.canoeheads.com)) makes it easy. They bring the canoes, life-jackets and the van for shuttling people to the start point. And after a day on the water, you arrive at your vehicle and they take the canoes away! If you just need shuttle service for you and your canoe, they offer that too. (CS)



Recover with a quick jaunt through Dawson Park to the second longest staircase (131 metres) at 87th Street and Rowland Road. Finish yourself off with the longest staircase in the city, a heart palpitating 151 metres, on the west side of 92nd Street at Rowland Road and Jasper Avenue. I tried to count the stairs but was far

too nauseated to care. (BB)

## CRAZIEST HUNTING EXPERIENCE

Fished the North Saskatchewan? Stalked wild deer? Even the gamesman who's done it all probably hasn't done this. Based out of Mayerthorpe, Hog Wild Specialties ([www.hogwild.ab.ca](http://www.hogwild.ab.ca)) offers guided

bowhunting for wild boar. Just imagine stalking through the wilds of Northern Alberta with your bow, tracking a wild, tusked beast. It's hard not to conjure up fantasies of Lord of the Flies, but you probably have to pay extra to roast your catch on a spit and dance around it half naked. Here Piggy. Piggy. (JD)

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#### CRAZIEST HILL CYCLING TRAINING

When I signed up for the MS Bike Tour with a team of five, cycling 160 kilometres from Leduc to Camrose and back seemed impossible for an eight-kilometre-a-day commuter like me. But "hill training is essential!" our training guru proclaimed to us. And so once a week we met to ride up and down the hills near Gallagher Park and 98th Avenue. The first week, our assignment was six of the first and one of the other. After the first ride up the Gallagher Park hill, I wanted to quit. After the second ride up, I fell off my bike and landed on my elbow, but I just kept going. (I have a great scar now to mark the occasion.) By the tenth week, we were up to ten times up the Gallagher Park hill and four times up 98th Avenue. As much as it seemed crazy to just go up and down and up and down, we felt pretty cool because alongside us were real Ironman-type athletes, doing the same kind of hill training we were doing! They frequently passed us, but that didn't diminish the accomplishment. Besides, as a reward, the hills we tackled on the MS Bike Tour seemed puny—or at least less crazy—by comparison. (CS)

#### BESTEST DRINKING GAME WITH A SPORT PROBLEM

Born in an American frat house as early as the 1950s, Beer Pong has managed to cross the northern border and is now becoming a popular

mainstay at Edmonton house parties. Combining the delicate art of ping-pong with the delicate art of binge-drinking, this "sport" involves two players (each positioned at opposing ends of a rectangular table) competing to be the last man standing—literally. Each player takes a turn attempting to toss a ping-pong ball in one of the other's half-full cups of beer. If the pitcher is successful, the defender must drink. The champ is determined by the most cups left at the end of the game, and, well, I'm sure the loser will be feeling a lot of something, if not a sense of lost pride, by the end of the game. (SR)

#### BESTEST SPORT FOR REKINDLING LOST CHILDHOOD (OR GOOFING OFF AT THE OFFICE)

Heelys are not cool. They're an amusement aimed at kids, like candy and video games. On the other hand, I like candy and video games. And Heelys. "The shoe with a wheel in the heel," Heelys are fun, speedy, and versatile. With a little imagination and perhaps the optional grind plates, a wide range of interesting tricks become possible. For me, the appeal is stealth: they aren't an obvious statement of eccentricity, like wearing a pot leaf t-shirt or growing out massive dreadlocks. You can enjoy Heelys and the benefits of responsible citizenry. Inasmuch as they encourage exercise, Heelys are healthy. Until you wipe out in them,

of course, fracturing your arm or head. I have a gigantic scar which is the reminder of the time that Heelys taught me exactly what the inside of your kneecap looks like (it's mostly red, with flashes of white). The Canadian Safety Council has recommended a ban on "heeling" in all public buildings, like schools and malls. They are number one on the toysa.ety.org list of worst toys, so they are horribly dangerous and bad for you. Hmmm... maybe they're cool after all.

#### BESTEST WAY TO NAMASTE

Fitness trainer Jesse Lipscombe and Angela Zawada have organized a gigantic yoga session scheduled for Sep 9 in Hawrelak Park. The number of attendees may break the record for world's largest outdoor yoga class, but that's not the only reason this event is a bestest this summer. The organizers want to bring more health and fitness options to the city, and more importantly get a tonne of people together to share in the positive energy that will pretty much be flowing through the water supply. Yogi or not, all abilities are welcome. The event will have music, food, and plenty of those lovely-to-look-at athletic physiques that are so often congruent with yoga class. Take the day to get yourself into the record books and get in touch with your inner self or whatever it is you're supposed to focus on in yoga class ... Stay limber! (CL)



#### BESTEST ROLL ON A LONGBOARD

It's a tie—Ribbon of Steel and Saskatchewan Drive. And by "roll" I don't mean skeleton luge or hairpin turns, but a nice, long easy cruise with hardly any need to push. The Ribbon of Steel follows the green space from 104th Avenue (behind Save-On) to Constable Ezio Faraone Park, dipping down at the end towards a blind corner at 98th Avenue (keep your eyes open out there). Once you're on the bike trail travelling east on Saskatchewan Drive, there's no need to push—just surf the path and enjoy the view. The push across the High Level Bridge isn't bad either if you want to combine the two. (JD)

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Buckcherry
- 5) Don't Matter  
Akron
- 6) This Is Why I'm Hot (chorus)  
MIS
- 7) Super Mario Bros.  
Super Mario Bros.
- 8) Girlfriend  
Avril Lavigne
- 9) Smack That  
Kluge
- 10) Glamorous  
Fergie

## ★★★★★ THE BESTEST OF EDMONTON ★★★★★



### BESTEST MISPLACED BUSINESS NEIGHBOURS

Walk into one business, and you'll see children's bibles and a 100 Huntley Club book series. Walk into the store next door, and you'll see titles like Suck It Dty 2 and MILF Meat. Such has been the contrast in the nearly three years since the Blessings Christian Marketplace moved in beside an Adult Superstore outlet in a 50th Street strip mall, near the Yellowhead Trail. Porn shop manager James Janis says all of his customers are surprised and make some kind of comment about the stores being side by side. "Everyone seems to think there's some kind of war going on, but they leave us alone, and we leave them alone," he said of his religious co-strip-mall tenant. "It's quite peaceful. Actually, it's quite boring." His store has been there for more than 15 years, while a bar and a golf shop have occupied the place next door in the past. Janis said some customers admit to going into both the porn and Christian stores, while a Marketplace employee specified that some come into her store to conceal what they've rented or bought next door before going back outdoors. The worker, who didn't want to be identified, has also heard surprise comments about the unlikely neighbours, and has seen people taking pictures in the parking lot out front. While there's no inter-store holy or cultural war, she also hears wishes from her customers that those getting porn could "change their life around" and get Jesus instead. "They say 'we hope to get some of them on the right side,'" the worker said. (MS)

### BESTEST PAVEMENT IN EDMONTON AND WHAT YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T DO WITH IT

Being a flat, unprepossessing spot on the map, we have to make our fun. Why not combine new stretches of road with the fun and X Games cred of road luge? This is actually a crazy variant of something my crew used to enjoy in the winter months. Basically, you tow a street luge behind a pony car from the Highway 2 turn-off to the Terrivilliger drive turn-off. The road is smooth, wide and designed for speed. Why not film the damn thing for the ESPN 2? It's as good as Finnish reindeer mushing. We should embrace our glut of macadam, eh? (AK)

### BESTEST PLACE TO MEET HOT SINGLE DOG LOVERS

Beg, borrow or steal (okay, don't steal) a friend's best friend and head down to Jackie Parker off-leash area any night of the week. As your canine companion leads you from hot guy to hot guy, you can subtly check out their obedience training. Remember: you can tell a lot about a man by the size of his dog. (EJ)

### BESTEST THING TO DO AT A BAR

Did you know bars are offering Guitar Hero II nights now? And to think that when I got so drunk that I passed out while I was playing it, my girlfriend called it "sad." (BB)

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Back (L to R): Bharat Agnihotri, Bill Bonko, Hugh MacDonald, David Swann.

Front (L to R): Rick Miller, Bruce Miller, Bridget A. Pastoor, Dave Taylor.

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### BESTEST OLD-SCHOOL LOUNGE

Ah, Teddy's. With its wood paneling, bookshelves, stained glass and overstuffed upholstery, all of it in a state of genteel decay, this Jasper Avenue landmark is a throwback to a bygone age of steak-pub decoration, an atmosphere somehow enhanced by the glare of the banks of VLTs. Ripe for a renaissance. (DZ)

### BESTEST ALTERNATIVE TO PEOPLE WATCHING

This is sort of like people watching, but instead of intentionally directing the focus of your gaze, you direct the focus of your hearing. This is particularly useful in that you may hear words like "bouncy" or "bulge," which lends credence to your own thoughts about the people you watch. You may have to sacrifice an afternoon, but it's worth the wait—and it may surprise you to learn of this auditory perch: the gutsplainingest place to listen in on a conversation is the cafeteria at the law courts, where you can hear all about how who stabbed whom, along with who the said stabber thinks is a little hottie. (AK)

### BESTEST PLACE FOR COUGAR WATCHING

Caught in a rift of the space-time continuum, Saturday nights at the Gallery Bar at the Mayfield Inn attract a dancing crowd of what could only be described as mature people of like-minded appetites. A frenzy of 1980s-inspired spa-tanners gyrates to the likes of Kung Fu Fighting and Funkytown. Comb-over burdened men with Herb Tarlek's fashion sense skulk outside the women's restroom. Women circulate about, their leopard-skinned heels wobbling tentatively. Sagging breasts are supported with wire and tape, backcombed hair is blown out of normal proportion and cherry red lipstick stains pouting mouths. This off-sale meat market is a blast from the not-so-distant past. (EJ)

### BESTEST PLACE FOR A GRAFFITI CONVERSATION

Graffiti is very much like television: it's a one-way medium. But we're living in a new fandangled world with new fancy pants ideas like responding to some jerk off's graffiti manifesto, written on the wall of a coffee house's water closet with our full-house wit and artful penmanship. Curiously enough it's a tie for the sexes between two different establishments. The men enjoy waxing idiotic-politico in the Sugarbowl's lavatory, whereas the women enjoy slagging and tagging in the stalls of the Purple Onion. This is a curious sociological phenomenon worth checking out—I'm looking at you, grad students. (AK)

### BESTEST NEW DOUCHEBAG HOTSPOT

Jasper Avenue between 108th and 107th. You can't walk to New City anymore without some bro confronting you with the paradoxical question, "You looking at my girlfriend, faggot?" (BB)

### BESTEST 'LISTEN BIRD' IN EDMONTON

The Listen Bird is a hot topic of discussion for nerds, prudes and aesthetes in area bookshops, and may be



### BESTEST PROOF A SUBURBAN HOME IS A MAN'S CASTLE

It's not every day that you see turrets, canons and a knight with sword and steel-plated armour in the suburbs, but that's what can be found topping a house in the Lendrum Place neighbourhood. The out-standing castle was built by dentist Ken Wallace, who bought the home and took over the existing basement dental business in the 1960s. The underground office meant that when his two daughters were born, he feared they had no place to play, so he built the castle as a playroom on top of the garage over the summer of 1980. Wallace collected the stain glass, furniture, and medieval artifacts at antique shows, and did the woodwork. The inside features a fireplace to heat the castle, a spiral staircase to a balcony overlooking the giant main room, and an observation glass pyramid on the ceiling. Wallace ended his practice 15 years ago, putting some old dental equipment out on the lawn as another standout ornament. When he moved to Arizona, he turned over the castle keys to his daughter Trish Clayton, whose children play in the big playhouse today. She said a number of people drive by to see the unique structure, including a few tour buses. (MS)

not? This bird is ever-present. We might as well award some kind of prize for the best looking one. My vote goes to a little one etched into an elm tree, about sixteen feet up on one of the sturdier boughs. The artist carves what looks like a cubist death-eagle from hell perched on a Daliesque droopy clock; the speech bubble cackles "the end is nigh, ada." Is it a commentary on decaying affluence? Is it the absurd threat of a jilted lover? There are so many confounding interpretations that it giddies the mind. I'm not going to say where it is, though, because the journey is half the fun. (AK)

### BESTEST PLACE FOR MEGA-GUERRILLA ART

The Shaw Conference Centre is asking for a big fat drawing to be planted on its sloping windows like a giant surprise kiss—a collaboration between storefront-painter James Garsdal and the Listen graffiti guy, maybe? I'm thinking a huge stencil of bandleader Artie Shaw, or maybe the

bearded mug of George Bernard. And while all those mini-murals on Old Strathcona's public utility boxes are nice, why not splash a mural on the side of the biggest utility box—the Epcor plant by the river. (BG)

### BESTEST ORGANIC MARKET

Bulk potion ingredients, lower prices, a good restaurant, and at least 30 per cent less smugness make Roots Organic Market our choice over other, more suburbanish organic stores. (DZ)

### BESTEST TIMEWARP

The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village east of town is a pride-fuelled recreation that drops you squarely into the bygone heart of Ukrainian settlement in western Canada. The best part is when you sometimes catch the kerchiefed, in-character interpreters gossiping about their contemporary social lives without breaking pioneer kayfabe: "Anna, you havink veesitor

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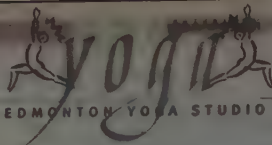
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## ★★ THE BESTEST OF EDMONTON ★★

### BESTEST FESTIVAL TO CLOG YOUR ARTERIES

The Fringe Festival is so full of gut-busting food stands that lots of people don't even know there are plays to gorge on. From the little sugar-sprinkled bags of Mini Donuts to the deep-fried chocolate bars on sticks, there's more than enough delicious lard to sate even the junkiest eater over nine days. (BG)



### CONTINUE FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

tonight?" "Oh, yes! Werry spayshel veesitor. He peek me up, take me to dance!" (DZ)

### BESTEST MONUMENT

Alberta is big (har har) on "World's Largest" whatever's - eggs, baseball bats, lamps, ducks. But tucked away in the cooler of the Charles Smart on 82 Avenue, just east of Mill Creek, is an often-overlooked marvel: the mighty, man-sized King of Donair. Stop by sometime and gaze through the little window at the world's largest log of spiced ground meat! (DZ)

### BESTEST PLACE IN TOWN TO WATCH A METEOR SHOWER

The Perseids meteor shower is a comin' just like it does every august when you can tilt your head skyward and gawk at the majesty of the universe. The trouble is the city's lights—

since we're not close enough to North Korea, where city lights are turned out to save money, we have to settle for a short drive out to Lewis Estates. With-in two minutes of the western fringe of this suburb, you're in farm country. On a clear night, lie on your car's hood, grab a pop and maybe play a little Brian Eno on your car stereo. Magic. (AK)

### BESTEST PLACE TO GO CAMPING IN A JIFFY

Besides finding a hidden corner of the River Valley, a quick drive due east out of the city nestles you in the heart of buffalo country at Elk Island National Park. Sometimes all you need to save yourself from internal combustion is a night out in the trees around a campfire assembling sticky s'mores. (CN)

### BESTEST GET-UP-AND-GO TRIP AROUND EDMONTON

The giant sausage that the Town of Mundare, uh, erected, looks like a classic kubasa seen from the monument's front and back, but viewed sideways from the gas station across the street it looks like... well, use your imagination. You are also left wondering why the bottom of the big Ukrainian sausage has a heart on. The Mundare kubasa is part of a monument series, reflecting northeast Alberta's heritage, that includes a giant pyrogy in Glendon, a huge pysanka (Ukrainian egg) in Vegreville, a big duck in Andrew, and some giant, ripe, round pumpkins in Smoky Lake. (MS)

### BESTEST EXCUSE FOR BEING LATE FOR EVERYTHING

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#### BESTEST PLACE TO TALK TO JESUS ABOUT YOUR SEX LIFE

Where's Borat when you need him? The wacky Kazakhstani pseudo-reporter would be right in his element entering this Edmonton house of worship and asking "Can Mr Jesus help me make the sex time?" The same billboard logo in front of the Stony Plain Road church is pasted on the side of its bus, suggesting a wider use of the slogan, but the ministry didn't return calls. However, based on recent advertising in a city daily, at least one other church in Edmonton is using intrigue about sex to bring in the flocks. (MS)

you tell them you had to drive for hours to get to the city and meet them, and that there was a traffic jam on the Whitemud, and that you had to stop and get cash because there are no banks in Devon, everybody forgives you with a sympathetic condescending smile, as they wonder why you'd bother living here. The truth is it's a only a 20 minute drive, depending on who you talk to—some say that's at 140 clicks, others claim 160 to make it in that time. But at legal speeds, it's really only 35 minutes to wherever the action is in the city, 40 if you stop at a bank (yes, there are banks in Devon) and if there are no traffic jams on the Whitemud. (SK)

#### BESTEST PLACE TO CORNER PREACH

All the big cities have those slightly kooky, overly articulate, impassioned street speakers by the curb, pro-

nouncing to the passersby. Think of London's Hyde Park Corner, with someone raving on about the end-times or their morning revelation. The Anglo-phoney Winston Churchill Square is the perfect place for Edmonton's first corner preacher—there's even that lookout spot, right above the Epcor Waterfall, that's a perfect sermon-on-the-mount for Alberta's mini-Moses. Suggested first topic: Why the %\$#@ is there an "Epcor Waterfall"? Now, go forth and rant! (BG)

#### BESTEST PLACE TO SEE WHAT YOUR FREAKY FRIENDS ARE UP TO WHEN THEY RUN OFF GIGGLING WITH A VIDEO CAMERA

They might be running off to make dirty videos, but they also might be

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

making short films for MetroTV. A cross between a TV-production meeting and a reality show, this interactive showcase of local filmmaking talent is the bestest way to spend one Saturday night a month. (CN)

#### BESTEST ARCHITECTURAL EFFECT

The array of highly reflective skyscrapers in the downtown core—some in cerulean, others in copper or a mute monolithic black—provide a light-celebrating kaleidoscope on days that aren't too overcast, making them a slight danger for those who delight enough in their celestial-reaching beauty to take their eyes off the obstacle course of people and vehicles and dog poop that exists perpetually in the heart of the city. But these have nothing on the twinkling ovoid glass "domes" drenching Commerce place with light. Descending from the second floor to the main doors opening onto Jasper makes the charm of this architectural feature especially potent. As you travel downwards in the right light, usually sunset, the light-limned glass stretched over a skeletal solid frame looks like a magical zeppelin descending onto a grandiose granite landing pad, sort of sci-fi and fantastic at the same time. The fairy lights dancing around the space also add to an unearthly, epic ambience, and one can easily forget he or she is but a miserable temp or

lawyer on a lunch break and play at anything from spaceport spy to Cleopatra. (MCO)

#### BESTEST PLACE IN TOWN FOR A GOOD OLD FASHION RUMBLE

Whether you're a Crip or a Jet or a Cobra, you'll need an ideal place to lay the smack on the other team's backside. Edmonton, for all its sprawl, has an endless supply of rumble sites for some nice pipe-on-chain action, and all you need to do is follow the signs that the rumblecrusians left us: anywhere you see a stenciled vertical line through a circle is the perfect arena for combat. I've seen the symbols in Rundle Park, a playground in Belgravia and outside an abandoned curling club in Beaumont. (AK)

#### BESTEST WASTE OF GAS

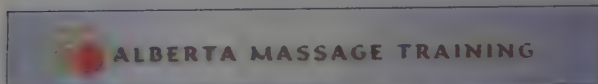
You jump in the car, drive the gas-guzzling, carbon-dioxide-emitting machine for 15 minutes in some choked-up traffic, park it on a side street, clogging up the neighbourhood, then go... running and walking? All you Running Room people—why are you commuting to run? Slip on your shoes and run around your neighbourhood. Need other runners? Run to meet each other, or take a bike—duathlon training! If you need the clothes at the store, why not mail-order them—then you can pick them up from your friendly daily exercising

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



#### BESTEST PLACE TO GET CARPET-BURN IN A NON-SEX-RELATED ACTIVITY

Any of the three Edmonton indoor soccer centres (West End, East End, South Side) in winter time. Pick your astro-turfed rink, slip on the shorts, then get ready to be tripped, slide tackle (risk a two-minute minor or worse) or stumble yourself into blood- and pus-oozing, splotchy red, skin-burning pain. You may not remember any goals you score, but your body will be left with lasting impressions of the thin layer of faded green abrasive carpet that's been laid on top of concrete. (BG)



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

mail-carrier next time you're jogging around the block. (BG)

### BESTEST SIMPSONS-LIKE STORE

Since the Simpsons started its long television run, it's a safe bet the employees of a convenience store on 107th Avenue and 110th Street, get asked "where's Apu?" at least a few times per year. Unlike the infamous cartoon conception, the Edmonton Kwiki-Mart's floors aren't sticki-mart and hopefully the food hasn't made anyone sicki-mart. For those amazingly not in the know, the corner store on Matt Groening's popular cartoon is run by Indian immigrant Apu Nahasapeemapetilon and his brother Sanjay, and is the source and stage of many of the series' gags, like all-syrup Squishies that bring on hallucinations. According to urbandictionary.com, the Kwik-E-Mart has become "a generic name for any convenience store, when you can't think of the name of a specific one." The Internet also suggests that Kwicki Mart is a more common store term outside North America, while Simpsons fans in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec can get amused by the Ottawa-based Quickie Convenience Stores. (MS)

### BESTEST USED BOOK STORE

I buy a lot of old paperbacks and nobody matches Alhambra on 81st Avenue. Stacks and stacks of books that run the gamut from pulp novels to hard to find history texts make this store the city's best place to find something you're looking for that you can't find anywhere else. The best part is the micro-sections for people like me with really niche-y tastes such as a Sherlock Holmes and a Beat poetry section. (BB)

### BESTEST MASCOT

"God bless all little boys with sling-shots!" Crystal Glass's all-around scamp Chip is a throwback; nowadays, the accidental vandal would be

prescribed some kind of brain-numbing medication and "diverted" into a "program". Ah, what am I talking about? He probably wouldn't have been outside in a non-structured activity in the first place, certainly not without a helmet. (DZ)

### BESTEST PAMPHLETTERS

Walking down on Whyte Avenue one sunny Saturday spring afternoon, we heard a strange cry. A trio of young gents were asking all who passed by for money, but they wanted to make sure that donors got their luche's worth, so they hollered "Punch a punk for a buck, punch a punk!" True story. Of course, most people laughed while passing by, and it seemed that more passersby than normal offered up the buck, but no one took them up on the punching business. My own trio of Ave-gawkers pondered on the life-span of such a gig. Obviously this is not something you'd want to be doing when nighttime hits and those pub-crawl double-decker buses converge on the Avenue. Not only that, but if your donors all wanted what they paid for, then how much could you conceivably make in a night? In the end, we decided that these dudes earned their keep with their inventiveness and sense of humour. (CN)

### BESTEST ART EXPERIENCE

I know it's not the most timely revelation, but with the Works festival just wrapping up, I would like to reminisce on how the Alberta Art Gallery's "Free For All" exhibit in February was the best thing to happen to the art community since they installed that giant bat on 118th Avenue. Not only was the most popular exhibit in the gallery's history, but it showed the hundreds and hundreds of hopeful artists who exhibited that they too could be part of a vibrant and engaging dialogue on Edmonton art—yes, even the fat, bawling dude with the oil on canvas nude self-portrait (serious-

EVERETT COLLECTION/STOCK PHOTO



## BESTEST PLACE TO SEE THE LEGACY OF OUR ALIEN SETTLERS

A lot of people wonder about the pyramids. Thousands, no millions, of hours have been spent contemplating how our ancestors in Egypt, Peru and Mexico built and aligned their pyramids. And how is that pyramids were built so similarly but so far apart? And what about those pyramid-like bumps on Mars? There are plenty of people out there who think that aliens settled the Earth, and, for them, this seemingly answers these questions. So it only makes sense that the Muttart Conservatory, home of many wonderful plants, is an alien nursery. With its glass walls, extra-terrestrial scientists can watch human interaction with nature, and there are plenty of samples for them to whisk away. (CN)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

ly). Here's hoping they can make this in a regular show at the gallery. (JK)

#### WORSTEST ART EXPERIENCE

Those ugly, rusted-out clumps of welded-together metal that dot various parts of the university campus. Ugh, they look like robot diarrhea. (JK)

#### BESTEST ACCIDENTAL CORPORATE ART

Perhaps left behind by a stray boatful of Minnows as their civilization collapsed in the hangover of the Bronze Age, the mosaic mural in the Standard Life Building (10405 Jasper Avenue) is magnificently over-the-top. Part of what makes it marvelous is the tension between its showiness (glittery tilework, the drama of its appreciable scale, plus an overhead

the piece indicates, it is associated with the Baker Clinic. Trouble is, the Clinic—a no-nonsense glass-fronted office with wall-to-wall medical records stretching dauntingly behind the staff—is far enough away to seem slightly embarrassed by the mural, like the hipster who takes her hick cousin to a show and abandons her for just a little too much fanciness not to come off as a rube against the backdrop of urbanites artfully pretending they aren't trying hard to look good. (MCO)

**BESTEST PLACE TO ALMOST GET IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO BUSY CHECKING OUT THE SIGHTS ON THE SIDEWALK TO DRIVE PROPERLY**  
Whyte Avenue. Seriously, it's out of control. Out of sexy control. (DZ)



#### BESTEST SPOT FOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TRIVIA EGGHEADS

One day last year, a man was spotted photographing the crossing sets of wires that power the LRT and number 5 trolley, where the LRT comes out of the ground at 95th Street. When asked why, he replied, "This is the only place in the world where LRT and trolley wires come together." City LRT director Dave Geake said the most similar crossings are in Europe and in San Francisco where the streetcars and trolleys meet. But the different powering arrangements between Edmonton's LRT and trolley mean their wires can't ever touch each other. So when the builders designed the crossing in the 1970s, they had to distance and isolate the wire sets, with the help of insulators. "It took a little bit of engineering, but it was relatively easy," said Geake, who described the related issues as being mechanical and electrical. The unique crossing is one area that LRT crews have to highlight during maintenance. "Mechanically, you have to make sure all the nuts and bolts are tight," Geake said. But if a bad situation arises, he said the electrical substations have built-in protection, so half the city's lights won't go out, for instance. Electrical engineering trivia buffs will also be fascinated to learn that the city will have to install a similar crossing where the soon-to-be-built LRT line by 114th Street crosses the number 7 trolley route at 76th Avenue. But the crossing will have to be designed differently because it isn't on an angle, like the 95th Street crossing. "It's a bit more of an engineering challenge," said Geake with a laugh. (MS)

spotlight bathing it in a warm luminescence) and its position, bashfully tucked away (not only is it on the second floor, it's around the corner from the main elevator byway, peering out from behind a palm tree). Consequently, to behold the round gold-edged piece, with its primitively flat green snake in a floating slither over an apple-red, troublingly cubist caduceus, you have to step right up. Also strange is the treatment of the materials in relation to its subject matter—how many sparkly medical industry logos do you see? As the thin lettering curving on the bottom rim of

#### BESTEST STRETCH OF THE RIVER VALLEY FOR THE CROSS-COUNTRY CYCLIST

Start from Riverdale and head west to the Goldbar Park Bridge. The riding's not terribly technical, but it's one of the longest stretches of uninterrupted off-road riding. That and it doesn't seem to get as busy here as it does on other areas of the trail system. (CN)

**BESTEST CLASSIC SUBURBAN STRIP MALL**  
The Pleasantview Professional Building was built in the 1960s, says a barber in the independent, vintage barber shop, and its rectangular architecture



### BESTEST PLANE-WATCHING POINTS

For those into the no life adventure of plane-watching, Edmonton's twin airports provide double the pleasure. The City Centre Airport even has an observation area off 121st Street, although the Via Rail station's parking lot gets you closer to the runway's edge. If you're into a plane-spotting picnic, try the park between 111th Avenue and Kingsway, where you can watch the aircraft buzzing the nearby roadways and malls. While you can see the tarmacs from above over a beer at a nearby second-storey pub, the best overview of the City Centre (and city's north end) is from the top-floor study lounge of NAIT's Business Tower building. Especially from tall buildings, anywhere in the downtown core gives you ample spotting opportunities, with the government fleet flying Alberta's premier and other cabinet ministers around being a constant sight. Edmonton's International Airport has no official observation area, but some prime plane-watching can be found on a range road just off Highway 19 (to Devon) by a farmer's field. Unlike in Calgary, security people have never bothered me (I even parked there on a 9/11 anniversary!). If you prefer concrete under your feet, you can get your Wayne's World experience near another spur of the tarmac, from the parking lot of a certain fast-food joint epitomizing suburban life on Leduc's north end. Spotting take-offs are cool (well, for some people), but the biggest roars seem to occur when the planes are coming down from the sky. (MS)

looks the part. Factor in the gull-wing dual streetlights outside, and you think you're watching the Barenaked Ladies' "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" video. One wonders if the giant wraparound pipes were installed at the time of construction as a normal fixture, and what exactly they are for. Inside, the bland wall paint and carpets leading to the myriad medical offices fit the building's basic nature. (MS)

### BESTEST ADVICE FOR BUSKERS WHO LIKE TO PLAY FOR CROWDS ON THEIR WAY TO LIVE MUSIC CONCERTS AT THE JUBE, RECALL PLACE OR THE WINSPEAR

Buskers sound much better before the ESO plays live for Alberta Ballet. They can sound just fine as a warm-up act for Eric Clapton. But, hey, buskers, if you really have the nerve to think you're a nice follow up act to Van Morrison or Alexandro Escovado or BB King, and if you actually believe that we can all still go home after the show and dream all night long about the music paid so much to hear, then

go ahead, make my day. Otherwise, the advice is this: go home when the show starts and leave us in peace afterwards. Please. (SK)

### BESTEST PLACE IN EDMONTON AREA FOR AL FRESCO SEX

If you're gonna do it, you might as well do it right, and the inevitable conclusion is a pleasure garden not unlike Eden. While beautiful flora are readily available at your local garden centre, you get too many nosy green thumbs in that environ. No, the answer is the Devonian Botanic Garden on good ol' Highway 60. Oh yeah! (AK)

### BESTEST DIRTY WEEKEND

Price competition keeps the price reasonable at the International Airport's many hotels (jacuzzi rooms with gas fireplace for under a hundred bucks!) and Leduc's proximity means you're psychologically out of town without wasting hours driving rather than fucking. (DZ)

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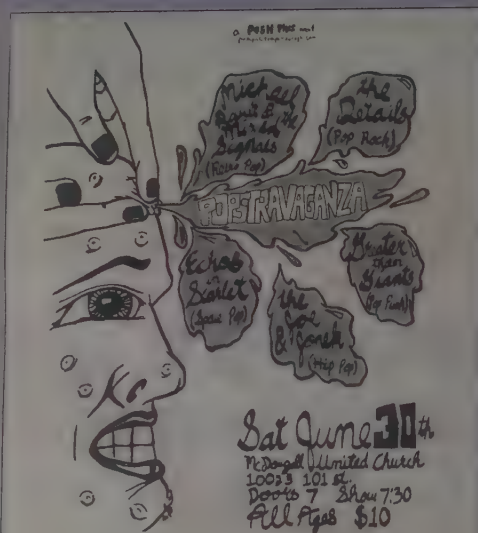
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# Bestest of Edmonton: local music edition!



## BESTEST (NO, WAIT, WORSTEST) SHOW POSTER EVER

I understand trying to appeal to the all-ages crowd by utilizing familiar imagery, but there has to be something the under-18 kids have in common beyond zits. Couldn't they have just used, I dunno, the banner from Nexopia?

PIERRE D'ARLINGTON & FRANÇOIS ZOLAN

Despite a severe and deepening lack of venues, a whole lot of borderline alcohol poisoning and the fact that this city's three dozen or so best bands are basically manned by different combinations of the same ten dudes, the powers that be here at *Vue* have decided Edmonton's fantastic, orgasmic, nationally-recognized-as-really-shit-fucking-hot music scene deserves its own slice of our annual Bestest of Edmonton issue. Even in a year in which the Sidetrack got sidetracked, Drive By said bye bye and Choke choked, there's still plenty of noisy noise and hip shanking hipness to rave about here in Stabmontion. To wit...

## BESTEST NEW VENUE

I dunno, can you think of something? This scene would accept pretty much anything at this point, so if you have a house, a large backyard, a studio apartment with understanding neighbours, or even feel like renting a U-Haul and parking it downtown for a couple of hours, then promoters would like to talk to you. I mean, there was a show on a *boat* last week, for fuck's sake...

## BESTEST NEW PRANK

The end of snobbery in the music scene. With venue space at a premium, it seems that bands are less and less concerned about who they play with, what order they play in, and who gets paid what. Even the city's top bands are just happy to play.

## WORSTEST SIMULTANEOUS THEMES

The rising popularity of both moustaches and cocaine. Dudes, everyone knows you weren't eating powdered donuts.

## BESTEST IT'S ABOUT FUCKING THEM

When the Edmonton Oilers put together a splashy, pump-up-the-volume, let's-get-ready-to-rumble style television spot to introducing their new junior team (the Edmonton Oil

Kings—creative bunch, those hockey people) they could have been as equally lazy with their choice of soundtrack, utilizing any of the staple hockey anthems. Instead, the commercial runs to the tune of Whitey Houston's "Liarbird." And at an Oilers game earlier this year, I swear I heard a Ten Second Epic song played between stoppages in play. When Deadmonton's dearest cultural institution starts embracing local bands, even a little, you can't help but encourage them. We're probably still a few years away from the day when the Oilers will skate through that ridiculous derrick accompanied by the Wednesday Night Heroes, but maybe we should start an email campaign or something, because I'll take "Dude You Feel Electrical" or "Black Hand" or "Grow Your Own Fucking Moustache Asshole" or "Shawna Don't Wanna" over that goddamned "woo hoo" tune any day.

## BESTEST (WELL, SURREAL-EST) EXPERIENCE

Now that some local musicians are finally getting a little bit of attention from the rest of the country, my television and I have sat through some strange moments lately. Have you ever been totally hungover on a Sunday flipping through channels and then all of a sudden the guy or guys you got wasted with the night before are on MuchMusic talking to that bimbo blond girl (or that bimbo blond guy) about the kind of vacuous stuff they always talk about on Much? It's pretty weird.

## BESTEST OFFSHOOT OF THAT LAST BESTEST

Nobody laughs out loud when you tell them you're from Edmonton anymore. It's more like a stifled snicker, and I can deal with that.

## WORSTEST MIMOUNDS

Secret shows that don't happen. Believe me, every band guy, promot-

er, music journalist and aging Police fan from 100 miles around didn't pile into the Starlite that night to see Sting's son's pop-rock trio.

## BESTEST MIMOUNDS

Secret shows that actually happen, like the White Stripes' gig at a north end drop-in centre that I wrote off as idle speculation and didn't bother attending (once bitten, twice shy, I suppose).

## BESTEST NEW BAND NAME

Hot Panda. I've said it before, and I'll certainly say it again—that name is finger Ling-Ling good.

## WORSTEST NEW BAND NAME

River City Boyz. I know we usually favour bands with a "Z" in their name, but this time it just makes it sound like gay porn. Why not just cut to the chase and call it River City Twinks?

## BESTEST MIMUND

Riding my bike to the (actually pretty cool) bike-in rock show held a couple of weeks ago in conjunction with bike month, I was stopped at least a dozen times by carloads of nattily dressed kids asking for directions to the show. Yes, carloads. To a bike-in show. In fact, due to a combination of so-so weather and, I dunno, sheer idiocy, I'll bet a lower percentage of the crowd had actually biked-in than at any other show held on a summer evening in this town.

## BESTEST FURMO EDMONTON SHERED HIP ON

Sheer pandemonium erupted when so-called "gone-for-good" bands like the Pixies and the Police came here. So where the hell is the smalls reunion? Choke broke up a month ago; it's about time for them to do the first of what could be many "one-off" reunion shows. And I think the Kasuals are due for another "one off" any time now...



## WORSTEST (NO, WAIT, BESTEST) BAND PHOTO EVER

Ten Second Epic. Count yourself in, boys



## BESTEST GUITAR FACE

Michael Raut—although I have to admit, without the guitar, this would look more like a "bestest medical examination face."

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## Looking for laughs in the funniest of places

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

It should come as no surprise that a play based on the work of Oscar Wilde should include a few of the famous aphorisms *bon mots*. What should be a bit shocking about Scott Sharplin's newest play, *The Trail of Salomé*, is that Wilde's wit is only the second funniest historical source Sharplin drew upon.

The funniest is the transcript from a 1918 trial involving Canadian dancer Maud Allan and her scintillating take on Wilde's *Salomé*, a scandalous little affair that came to be known as the "Cult of the Clitoris" case. As you might imagine, and as Sharplin most definitely would concur, there are few things funnier than the stuffiest of early-20th century Brits explaining the evils of the clitoris.

"The transcripts are absolutely hilarious. I think they're funnier than any of the lines I actually wrote for the play," Sharplin says with a quick smile. "One of the medical experts they called in warned them that an engorged clitoris might encourage a woman to couple with an elephant, and he goes on to call it a 'superficial organ' that 'does nothing to help the race.' This was in court: how could you not find that funny?"

Though there's certainly a lot of fun to be had at the expense of clitoral hysteria—and Sharplin readily admits that *Trial of Salomé* is as fun a piece as he's written—Sharplin hopes that the absurdity of the whole

### PREVIEW

THU JULY 5 - SAT JULY 14, 8PM  
**THE TRIAL OF SALOMÉ**  
DIRECTED BY AMY NEUFELD  
WRITTEN BY SCOTT SHARPLIN  
STARRING LESLIE CAFFARO, DENNY DEMERIA  
AND KAYLAN ZEPHYRUS  
WALLERDALE PLAYHOUSE (10322 - 83 AVE.)  
\$12 - \$16

situation provokes more than just laughter. Guffaws aside, the real trial was a fairly serious blow to artistic freedom in England at the time, a vicious, mudslinging, reactionary spectacle that almost ruined Allan's life. So laugh, please, but don't forget that sometimes the biggest laughs come from serious places.

"A lot of the humour does come from the fact they're taking something that's incredibly absurd to us so seriously," Sharplin explains thoughtfully. "At the same time, though, you can't really just sort of pass it off as those stodgy Brits being ridiculous: we still have people trying to ban *To Kill A Mockingbird*, or blaming disasters on certain groups of people, and it comes from the same kind of place, where people are trying to defend a certain lifestyle by deflecting their anxieties onto a more obvious symbol."

"I think it's important to show how absurd that sort of position can be," Sharplin continues, "but we can't really forget that the only reason it's so funny is because there are people who did take it that seriously." ▀

## Time for closing the books on the old apartment

### BOOKS HOPSCOTCH

JOSEF BRAUN  
hopscotch@vueweekly.com

There was a time when, with the help of a few tie-downs, I could move all of my worldly possessions from one place to another in the trunk and backseat of my old '88 Jetta. Back then I seemed to change my address more often than some people get haircuts. I remember once living in a tiny bachelor on 99th street and still having room for dance parties, even with the futon unfolded. I was practically camping! My sensibility has always been on the spare side, so the relative ease with which I could up and move sat very well with me.

But life changes. Things appear. While it's true that to this day I've never owned a couch, my desire for less has been in increasingly serious conflict with the twin evils of my monstrous sentimentality and my fathomless talent to accumulate certain kinds of objects, like LPs, hubcaps, correspondence and, bulkiest of all, books. When you're in your early 20s, such items are still few enough in number to be of little concern, and one's attachment to them feels at worst like a harmless affectation. A decade or so later, the rate of accumulation is terrifying and hydra-like. You turn around and suddenly there seems to be more of the god-damned things, as though they lay eggs in corners and hatch when you sleep.



I just moved again, if only to a place three blocks away from my previous residence. While moving, I discovered that I own three turntables. I knew of two—where did the third one come from? I thought I was hallucinating. But hey, free turntable. Would any reasonable person actually expect me to get rid of a perfectly good turntable?

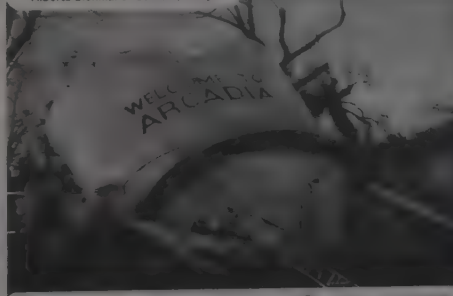
Boxing up the books was for me the real Herculean effort. Before I even started packing, I proudly selected what I

thought was a bold number of volumes to take to my favourite used bookstore. Of course I didn't sell them. I traded them. For more books. The likelihood of my having time to read half of these new additions in the next, say, three years is very low, but as my buddy Charlie used to say to me, they'll be there when I need them. It's not like they have an expiry date. At least not in my lifetime.

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER

### LIVING UTOPIA AND DISASTER 2007

Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art



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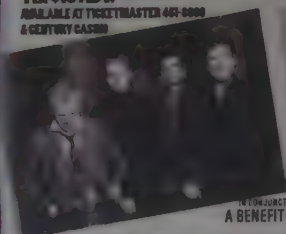
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## Exit, pursued by a musical SUPERB *WINTER'S TALE* OUTSHINES LACKLUSTRE *TWO GENTLEMAN* AT RIVER CITY SHAKESPEARE

DAVID BERRY / [david@vuwweekly.com](mailto:david@vuwweekly.com)

Maybe the best example of just how far apart the *River City Shakespeare Festival's* two productions are this year is found in Julien Arnold. The veteran actor and artistic associate of the festival goes from playing the congenial and thoroughly wronged King of Bohemia in John MacDonald's spirited but speculative take on *The Winter's Tale* to alternating between a freaked-out, white-fro hippie and a lime green soldier in John Kirkpatrick's unfortunately honest take on the 1971 musical version of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Guess which one works better.

To be fair, Kirkpatrick really only deserves blame in so much as he picked the musical: his interpretation does a service to the spirit of the thing, but this is just not a play where that can be considered a favourable move. Bookended by an intro and chorus that manage the doubly impressive feat of assuming the audience is too thick to understand the play and wrapping that dumbed-down mess up in the kind of sugar-high naïveté that made the hippie movement so self-righteously annoying (in this case, society was right to shoot the messenger, even if they should have asked questions first), the play doesn't get any better in between.

The music is fine for the cutesy bits, but lacks the heft to deal with anything serious, such as Proteus' final revelation; though it's mercifully abandoned for those parts, it's a clue that perhaps Galt MacDermot's score isn't equal to the task. This is to say nothing of the fact the songs rarely ever have the decency to be catchy.

Accordingly, the cast doesn't seem to be having a whole lot of fun throughout, with the possible exception of Ron Pederson. Pederson splits time between a lederhosened cupid singing scales as the Vissi d'amore, and the sniveling twit Thurio—where he leads one of the few really energetic numbers, "Thurio's Samba"—and wears both costumes with the flaunting flourishes they demand. The rest of the cast certainly maintains the standard the festival demands, but it's all they can do to drag the musical towards a respectable adequacy.

PREVIEW

UNTIL SUN JULY 22

**RIVER CITY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**

DIRECTED BY JOHN KIRKPATRICK, JAMES MACDONALD

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, JOHN CUARE

STARRING SHELDON ELTER, CHRIS BULLOUGH, JOHN WRIGHT,

JULIEN ARNOLD AND ANNETTE LOISELLE

HERITAGE AMPHITHEATRE (HAWRELAK PARK), \$15-\$20

**ALL CONCERNED** fare much, much better in *The Winter's Tale*, especially considering the play's internal disparity: it's essentially a pensive tragedy and frolicking comedy joined by an intermission, but both halves are thoroughly engaging on different strengths.

The first is John Wright's turn as the jealous King Leontes, and, as always in these cases, he's stellar. Wright has the rare gift of making Shakespeare's language sound as feverish and as emotionally naked as it would have on the Elizabethan stage without losing its cadences, spilling the words out of his mouth in equal parts pain and poetry. His Leontes is frustratingly sympathetic for it, undoubtedly bullying his way through the first act, but doing so for understandable aims. Annette Loisel is every bit his equal, particularly in her heart-rending death scene, filleting Leontes' misguided punitiveness even as she withers under its strain.

The second half is decidedly lighter, and here Sheldon Elter takes over as a too-clever-by-half rogue, selling the peasants back whatever he stole from them in the previous act. I had thought *Two Gentlemen's* music might have suffered for the outdoor venue, but Elter's energy here has no problem washing across the whole of the amphitheatre, producing smiles almost as big as his.

MacDonald manages to reel in the energy enough to make the ending, a decidedly more sombre affair, work to its full emotional effect, a decidedly fitting coda. It's a shame the two shows that make up the festival couldn't be balanced that adeptly, but at least one of the productions manages to live up to the festival's pedigree. **v**

# IT'S ALMOST THAT TIME...

There are some that, admittedly, I don't think I really even want to read. I seriously considered tossing this gargantuan hardcover collection of essays about Aleister Crowley. I mean honestly, I'm more likely to kill time listening to Ozzy sing "Mr Crowley" than read this crimson-coloured doorstop about Mr Crowley. But just as I was giving it a dismissive, parting glance, I found inside a piece of paper, a letter from the girl who gave me the book when I was 14 years old. It was long, repetitive, gushy, occasionally incoherent, slightly creepy and deeply moving to me. Now how can I get rid of that book?

The thing about such objects is that they hold memories—thus, lose the object and you lose the memory. That's my fear anyway. Perhaps it's foolish. Who knows what might trigger a memory? I remember reading somewhere that smells are supposed to be particularly good for bringing back all kinds of stuff. But there you go: I read about it. Probably in a book. I simply cannot escape the allure of the book.

If they're going to keep hanging around, perhaps I should discover new purposes for books besides reading them. I recall how in Paul Auster's *Moon Palace*, the introverted orphan protagonist with the unlikely name of Marco Stanley Fogg inherits 1492 books from his Uncle Victor, and uses the boxes of books to furnish his Manhattan apartment. His bed, his table, you name it: made outta books.

With the death of Uncle Victor, Marco's essentially penniless, however, and can no longer afford to go to Columbia University. Rather than arbitrarily get a job, he starts reading the books, one after the other, in no particular order other than how he finds them, without focusing on any particular subject, style or author, just reading and reading. And every time he finishes a book, he sells it, until all the books have been read and sold and Marco has nothing, no books, no dough. He then gives up his apartment and lives in Central Park, eating out of garbage cans.

I don't know how much I like the eating garbage part, but the rest of Marco's journey is hugely appealing to me right now, as I sit on the floor and look at stacks of boxes full of books, blocking out the windows of this absurdly overpriced apartment. I wish I could just read myself silly, give up everything, stop working, be homeless, cross the country on foot. But I'm on a different path I guess, one that includes writing this column to make a few bucks to pay for this point, to give me enough free time to reduce the stacks, to pursue those lingering ambitions, to read those still unknown-to-me texts, and to dream. ♥



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Help us get freaky! We want your question suggestions for this year's poll. Make it weird or keep it simple! Either way, the first person to email us a question that gets used, gets a \$20 gift certificate. Go to [vueweekly.com](http://vueweekly.com) and click on the Sex In The City '07 link to submit your questions. (deadline for submissions is July 10)

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BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

The ukulele has had its image tarnished over the years. From Tiny Tim's "Tiptoe through the Tulips" to your dad's really shitty rendition of Tiny Tim's "Tiptoe through the Tulips," the ukulele never seems to get any respect. Ukulele-based cover band (and Golden Girls super fans) the **Be Arthurs** are aiming to change that with their performances at this year's StreetFest.

"The ukulele is kind of like a joke or a toy instrument, but it's also a really good instrument," explains Ryan Parker, who is joined in the duo by Sheldon Elter. "If a song sounds good on a ukulele, it's a good song."

Although the two men started the band as a joke—one quite likely fuelled by alcohol, Parker admits—it has become much more than what the two had originally intended.

"We started out busking, but now we're getting asked to do gigs where we're not just wallpaper music," he says, adding that the band has started to rehearse with a drummer who plays a set of toy drums—but who unfortunately will not be at StreetFest—and are even considering adding a xylophonist. "When we started, this wasn't what we were aiming for," Parker laughs.

**EVEN THOUGH THE BE ARTHURS** are playing more and more proper gigs,



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MANY MANY  
CHURCHILL SQUARE, PASS THE HAT

their first love continues to be passing the hat while playing on the street. Having busked at the Fringe and a number of other places around town, the band is looking forward to its first

appearance at StreetFest.

"It's really exciting because (Street Fest) is so different than the Fringe. The Fringe is like a theatre festival with an appetizer of street performing," Parker says, pointing out that StreetFest is oriented exclusively towards buskers. "Plus Sheldon and I are getting better too—we used to need a beer or two just to get out there, but now we don't!"

# VUEWEEKLY Presents the 6th Annual EDMONTON MUSICIANS DIRECTORY

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## DANCE

**FEATS FESTIVAL OF DANCE-ALBERTA DANCE ALLIANCE** (422-8107) Featuring workshops, hip hop, jazz, contemporary and world dance performances + **Westbury Theatre**, TransAlta Arts Bams, Parka Velocity, July 6-8pm • **Catalyst Theatre**, from *Luminous Pulses* July 6-7pm • **Catalyst Theatre**, *To Wind* Tongues, July 8-7pm • \$20 adv/\$24 door/\$33 (two shows, adv/\$35 all three shows, adv/\$40) • **Verdine** flamenco dance encounter, July 5 (12 noon) • **FLAMENCO EN VIVO** Arta Horowitz Theatre, 800-114 St. at Campus (343-4943) • Flamenco guitar and dance • Saturday, July 6 (8pm) • \$25 (adv/\$30 door)

**HIPOH HUIZEERED CHURCH** Squares • Hip hop • July 6-15 (11:30-2:30pm; 4:30-5:30pm) • Part of the International Street Performers Festival

**JOE TIME PRODUCTIONS-DRUM AND DANCE** James Hareld-Hall, 9631-8th Ave. (433-8278) • Come and practice your hand drumming skills or learn some things new in a group setting. Calling all Tribal dancers for a chance to improve and to love music. Each jam starts and ends with guest musicians or dancers. Drums are available to borrow, and all experience necessary • First and last Tue no month (8:30-9:30pm) • \$10 (adv)/child under 12 free

## GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

**AGNES BUIENGA GALLERY** 12310 Jasper Ave (482-2854) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **NEW WORKS** Artworks by gallery artists, Emotione Talsford, Karen Turovich, Greg Cragg, Christine Harper, Danielle Lemieux, Ken Wallace, Scott Plair, and Michel Tanno Grah • July and August

**ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY** 10185-106 St (489-6511) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed all holidays) • **Feature Gallery: BREWHAHA** Fun and fabulous tattoos and t-shirts, until July 14 • **Discovery Gallery: COMING UP NEXT** Artworks by emerging fine craft artists Katherine Lys (installation) and Danielle Boveall (ceramic installation), until July 14

**ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA** Enterprise Square, 100, 10230 Jasper Ave. • Open Mon-Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 11am-5pm • Open in June, Sat and Sun 12:30-1:30 • 2:30-3:30pm • **CAPITAL MUSEUM EDMONTON ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN, 1940-1968**, until Sept 9 • **THE 2007 ALBERTA BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART-LIVING UTOPIA AND DISASTER** Artworks by 21 artists, until Aug. 26

**ART MOOD GALLERY** 12220 Jasper Ave (453-1555) • **A WALK IN THE WOODS**, Paintings by Michel Laroux • July 12-21

**AIDS CAFE** 10349 Jasper Ave (990-0331) • Acrylic paintings by Rodrigo Lopez • Until Sept 31

**CENTRE D'ARTS 5103-95 Ave** • Mon-Fri 10am-6pm; Sat 10am-5pm • **ART/UTURE**, Artworks by Sylvia Grist, Gwyn, Claudine Audette-Rozon, West & Art Group • July 6-18 • Opening reception: July 6 (7-8:30pm) artists in attendance

**FAB GALLERY** Main 1st Fine Arts Bldg, 112 St. & 89 Ave (429-2081) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 2-5pm • **ASPECTS OF ABSTRACTION** A Selection of Paintings from Private and Public Collections by Professor Graham Peacock • Until July 14

**FRINGE GALLERY** 10515 Whyte Ave (424-0240) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • **ROTSAM AND THEN SOME** • Until July 31

**GALLERY AT MILLER-STANLEY A. MILLER LIBRARY** Main St. St. Winston Churchill Sq (498-7030) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 1-5pm • **THE SHOW**, Girls' Form artworks by Donna Day Harris, Margie Fiddes, Caryl Tobin, and Sharon Wilkins Rubick, July 10-Aug 30 • **Education Room: GLASS ART ASSOCIATION OF CANADA**, LUCENT: A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN GLASS The Glass Art Association of Canada: part of the Works Festival, until July 6

**HARCOURT HOUSE** 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • **Front Room**, Main 1st The Works and Four (both rooms), Harcourt House members' shop • Until July 21

**JEFF ALLEN GALLERY** Strathcona Place, 10631 University Ave (433-5282) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm • **ART UNLIMITED** Mixed media artworks by sisters Isabelle Klapachuk and Mary Jane Traflet • Until July 26

**JOHNSON GALLERY** (NORTH) 11817-30 St (479-8424) • Open Tue-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • **Sorgholips** by Norval Martineau, Jackson Beardsley, prints by Ted, paintings by Cindy Revell, wall art by Raymond Chou, (NORTH) 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm • Artworks by Shirley Thomas, Editha Marked Buchanan, Serengeti of Edmonton buildings by George Webber, posters by Jim Speers

**LATITUDE & ALTITUDE** 10248-106 St (423-5353) • **Main Space: CANDY MITT**, Mandy Yen Miller, Catherine

Bottomer, Julie Major present a collaborative project until July 14 • **THE PERFECT BARK**, Tracie Velez, **SEARCH**, Photographs of female forms in plastic by Ania Traciowski, until July 14 • Exhibit hours extend to 9pm on Thu, July 5, July 12 during Latitude 53's Summer Rooftop Patio Luncheon • Latitude Summer Rooftop Series: hosted by a range of local "celebrity" DJs and hosts; rooftop patio every Thu until Aug. 15 (5-9pm)

**LOFT GALLERY A** Ottewill Arts Centre, Red Barn, 590 Broadmoor Blvd, Sherwood Park (467-4481) • Open Sat 10am-4pm, Thu 5-9pm • **ALL MEMBERS ART SHOW** • Until July 26

**MANHOUTH BOOKS** 6419-112 Ave (470-4050) • Open Tue-Sat 9:30am-5pm, Sun 12:30-5pm • **STATIONS** Photographs by Denis Wall • Until July 31

**McMILLAN GALLERY U** of a Hospital, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-6pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • **HAT-STORY** Artworks by various artists curated by Danielle LaBrie • Until July 29

**MCMAHON** 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-6:30pm • **DIMORPHIC PERCEPTIONS**, Paintings by Elaine Tweedy and Donna Merdithy, until July 26 • **The Dining Room Gallery: LADY OF THE LAKE**, Paintings by Kathy Meaney, until Aug 9

**MUDDY WATERS CAFE** 821-111 St, www.artunion07.org • **CLARITY ART AUCTION** U/HUMAN Featuring Artworks donated by local artists and U of A Fine Art and MFA students. There will also be Food, a Live DJ (Brad Bourne) spinning House/Indie music • July 7 • Proceeds go to www.human.org

**RENTAL LUXURY STORE** • **ELEMENTAL: WATER CAN BE AIN** Artworks by the members of the Sculptors' Association of Alberta • Until Sept. 30 • Opening reception: July 18 (6-9pm)

**NIMA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS** Stollery Gallery, 9704-111 Ave (474-7611) • Open Mon, Wed, Fri 9:30am-2:30pm, Tue, Thu 9:30am-6pm • **COLLAGE** *After NEW WORK* Featuring artworks by studio artists in the Stollery Gallery, part of The Works • Until July 26

**PETER BENTONER JERILAN** • **WALL OF TEXT** (2088) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **TURF** Artworks by emerging artists • July 19-Aug 11

**PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY** 19 Peron Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Thu (10am-6pm) • **KAI-PWA**, Featuring artworks by Murray Allen, Tony Bala, Kh. Chhavi, Zarif, in conjunction with the Art of the Downtown Art Walk (6-5pm), July 5-28 • Artist at Heart: July 12, 26 (7-9pm)

**PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES** 8555 Roger Rd (427-1750) • Open Mon-Sat 9am-4pm, Wed 4:30-6pm • **IMMORTAL NATURE'S AGELESS HARMONY: THE BOTANICAL** *LANTERN STUDIES OF JULIA COPELAND MCCALLA*, Hand-coloured glass lantern slides of flowers and plants by William Copeland, 1914-1938 • Until Sept. 1

**RUTH ALBERTA MUSEUM** • **SMALL WONDER** • Open daily 9-5pm • **SMALL WONDER: THE MINISCULE MAGNIFIED** View images of the micro world of mosses, insects, small shells and seeds: until Sept. 3 • **STORIES FROM THE SOUTHERN COLLECTION: A 150-YEAR JOURNEY** First Nations and Metis artists (1859-60), until Sept. 3 • **CODE AND COLLECTED**: See the unseen from the Museum's collections, until Sept. 3 • **GLEN ROSE: A RETROSPECTIVE**, Landscape photographs, until Sept. 3

**ST. ALBERT ARTWALK** • Various venues in St. Albert: Wares, Modern Eggs Gallery, Village Gallery, Art Beat Gallery, Emporio, Studio Gallery, The Bookstore on Peron, Cargo and James, St. Thomas Coffee House, Concept Jewelry • Until July 15

**SCOTT GALLERY** (4041-124 St (488-1869) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **SMALL SCULPTURE** New steel works by Peter Hida • Until July 10

**SNAP GALLERY** 10209-97 St (423-1432) • Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • **SACRA PRIVATA**, Works on paper by Blair Breman; until July 21 • **RAGE SALE**, Fundraiser in conjunction with Blair Breman's exhibit *Sacra Privata*, 100% of the money raised from the sales of Blair Breman's art work from *Sacra Privata* will go towards SNAP's exhibitions and education programming, Sat, July 21 • **Outer Gallery: UNCOMMON REMAINS-NEXTST** Printworks by four young artists/designers; until July 21

**SPURGE GROVE ART GALLERY** 35-5 Ave, Major Cultural Centre (962-0584) • **ALL ABOUT ST** Recent encaustic wares and acrylic paintings by Lorna Kemp • Until July 14

**STRATHCONA COUNTY MUSEUM** Arts • **THE ARCHIVES** 913 Ash St, Sherwood Park (467-8189) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, weekends by appointment/pre-booked tour • **SPRINTS FROM THE PAST** Featuring sports photographs, photographs and collectibles from the early 1900s to the late 1980s, July 5-Sept 3 • Strathcona County Museum and Archives 10th Anniversary; refreshments and entertainment, July 12 (1-3pm)

**THE STUDIO GALLERY** 11 Peron Street, St. Albert (460-5930) • Open Tue-Thu 12-5pm, Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-5pm or by appointment • **ESSENCE OF WOMEN** Artworks by Linda Wilder • July 26-28 • Opening reception: July 5 (6-9pm)

**TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE** 11211-142 St (452-8100) • **LOST WORLDS**: Exhibition from dinosaurs to ancient civilizations • Until Sept. 3

**TU GALLERY** 10718-124 St (462-9684) • **FINE LEADS, GREAT CHESTS AND HOT SEATS**: Fine furniture from NAIT's Advanced Woodworking and Furniture Design graduating class • Until July 21

**URBAN ROOTS** 32 Ave, 104 St, Artillery • **FORMWARD**: Progressive Canadian graffiti curated by John Drager • Until July 15

**VAAGA GALLERY** 301 Rd, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-6pm; Sat 12-4pm • **DIVERSITY 2007**, Artworks by 100 artists in the members' shop; part of The Works Festival • Until July 21

**WATERLOO PLAYHOUSE** Lobby, 10222-83 Ave (432-

7571) • Art in the Lobby: Drained by Nature, Watercolor by West 4 Art Group, Casey Demick, Uta Ruder, Jennifer Solly, and Lynn Tupper, in conjunction with *The Trail of Salome* • Until July 14 (viewing one hour before curtain)

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**EDMONTON RARE ANIMALS** • **He-Ha-Ho** comedy with host Kathleen McGee featuring Andrew Hoeny • Every Thu 8pm • No cover

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**HYPOCRISY: SAT AND SUNDAY** • **Shawn Galt** (812-1122) • **Wednesday Night Live**: Open stage every Wed for comedy, and music hosted by Barbara May and the *Shining One* (8-10pm) • No cover

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## THEATRE

**EDMONTON THROUGHT FIRES: THE HAZE OF THE EAGLE** Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield, 184 St. (463-4051) • **Complicated** and written by Jim Brewer, with parodies of well known Broadway hits to original comedy songs, this show takes gentle fun at all aspects of our lives • Until Aug. 26

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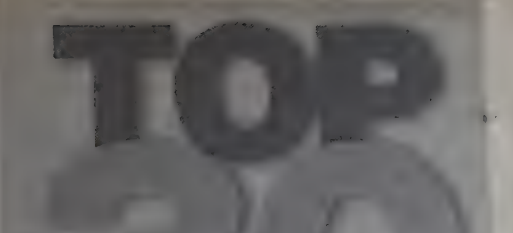
**GREENY, TWO-FOR ONE, JULY 13** • **THE LAST WILL, BUT VETERANARY OF OCEANLAND MACHINERY** • **Jubilations Dinner Theatre**, 9862-170 St, WEM (469-2424) • **Comedy** by Scott and Yanni Cranwell. After 12 years of mulling a centenarian and eccentric old billionaire, the time has finally come to find out who sucked up enough to become the nightfall heir to the family fortune • Until Aug. 12

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**THE TRAIL OF SALOME** Waterloo Playhouse, 10222-83 Ave (432-2945) • London, 1918, at the height of wartime panic, actress-dancer Maud Allen is singled out for performing Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, but Maud won't sacrifice her reputation without a fight, and the subsequent angel tale becomes until every pair of British ears is burning. World Premiere written by Waterlaid's Artistic Director • Until July 14 (Tue-Sat, Sun 2pm) • \$12-\$14 at TK on the Square (4-7:57pm, door

**VIRTUALLY PERFECT** Azimuth Theatre, 11315-106 Ave • **By Michael Andrew Banks**, presented by *Unleashed* • **The story** about two best friends, Roger, a young scientist prodigy working on his secret project and Mike who mourns for the death of his fiancée April who died suddenly, one year ago • Open July (7-9:30pm), matinee July 7 (12-30pm) • \$15 at TK on the Square



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4. Bjork - Volta (atlantic)
5. Feist - The Reminder (arts & crafts)
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8. Joan Armatrading - Into The Blues (429)
9. Wednesday Night Heroes - Guilty Pleasures (bvo)
10. The National - Boxer (4ad)
11. Arcade Fire - Neon Bible (merge)
12. Kings Of Leon - Because Of The Times (rca)
13. Down The Hatch - I Got A Bad Feeling About This... (dth)
14. Rufus Wainwright - Release The Stars (geffen)
15. Dinosaur Jr. - Beyond (fat possum)
16. Tinasaur Army - Music From Regions Beyond (helicat)
17. Battles - Mirrored (warp)
18. Army Winehouse - Back To Black (universal)
19. Modest Mouse - We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank (epic)
20. Lucinda Williams - West (jolt highway)
21. Pelican - City Of Echoes (hydrahead)
22. John Prine & Mac Wiseman - Standard Songs For Average People (oh boy)
23. Nekromantik - Lifes A Grave And I Dig It (helicat)
24. Ry Cooder - My Name Is Buddy (nonesuch)
25. Elliott Smith - New Moon (kill rock stars)
26. Hot Little Rocket - How To Lose Everything (fuzz)
27. John Wort Hannam - Two Bit Suit (black hen)
28. Boris With Michio Kurihara - Rainbow (drag city)
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# Verhoeven pens a carnally entertaining *Book*

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@viewweekly.com

Drawing on both his childhood memories of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and reputedly studious historical research, Paul Verhoeven's first feature since 2000's all-too-suitably-titled *Hollow Man* marks both his return to the Dutch film industry and to high artistic form. Brutality, vulgarity, treachery, humiliation, exploitation, colourful spectacle and careening subversion, all constructed upon an unlikely but weirdly sturdy moral core: *Black Book* (*Zwartboek*) makes for a singularly Verhoeven night out, which is to say it's big, excessive, carnal entertainment shot through with a wicked streak of perversity and wit.

The only other established filmmaker I can think of with a comparable sensibility would be Roman Polanski; oddly enough, both directors have now given us their take on the plight of European Jews during the Second World War, a subject that's supposed to be the exclusive domain of the sort of sombre, reverential, prestige pictures that Polanski and Verhoeven just don't seem able to woo. Thankfully.

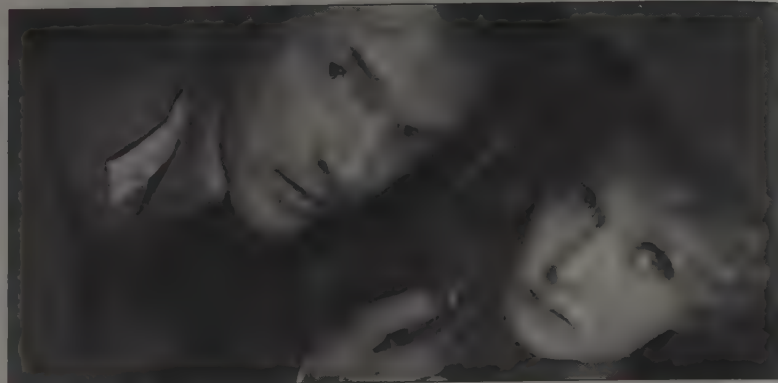
Like *The Pianist*, *Black Book* doesn't allow a little thing like genocide or fascism to dull its teeth or persuasive misanthropy. Unlike *The Pianist*, there are a

THRILLER

OPENING FRI JULY 5  
**BLACK BOOK**  
DIRECTED BY PAUL VERHOEVEN  
WRITTEN BY GERARD SOETEMAN, VERHOEVEN  
STARRING CARICE VAN HOUTEN, SEBASTIAN KOCH,  
THOM HOFFMAN, HALINA REIJN

conspicuous number of genuine acts of heroism in *Black Book*, but virtually all of them are performed not by the ostensible collective forces of good (ie: the Dutch Resistance, who prove themselves to be divided, disorganized and even anti-Semitic), but by a single individual, the slinky Mata Hari heroine Rachel (Carice van Houten), who must first witness the slaughter of her entire family, later endure the advances of a lecherous Nazi toad with dead eyes and ultimately become the target for what must surely be the most grotesque homage to *Flashdance* imaginable.

ONCE EMPLOYED BY the Resistance, Rachel changes her name to Ellis, dyes her hair—and I mean *all* her hair—a strawberry blonde that seductively contrasts her dark blue eyes and relies on her trained singing voice and beguilingly forward sexuality to woo Nazis and collect information. Trusting to a fault but smart as a whip, she's also a total knockout with legs that go on for a good long while, and is compared at one point to Jean Harlow, though her perky smile



wouldn't look out of place on the face of Kirsten Dunst—if you can imagine Dunst as a sizzling sexpot, that is.

It's no wonder that nice Nazi Muntze (*The Lives of Others*' Sebastian Koch)—a sensitive, smolderingly handsome widower with a soft spot for stamps—falls for her even while fully suspecting she's a spy. Of course, in Verhoeven's world of dark desire, she falls for him, too.

Reuniting Verhoeven with his old writing partner Gerard Soeteman,

*Black Book* is a project that the pair has apparently been cooking up for many years. It's flush with details and talismanic objects and it just moves like nobody's business, but, as is generally the case with Verhoeven, it works with unapologetically over-the-top, broad brushstrokes. There's about as many double-crosses and wild plot twists to this thing as there are nude scenes (that is, a lot), and virtually every one of them is planted in a previous scene, tying together the whole

movie in a chain of neat equations.

If this feels like overly schematic filmmaking, it should be said that *Black Book*'s more conventional aspects are precisely what help to make its more audacious ones fly. It's a symptom of the conflicted approach to movies that makes Verhoeven such a rarity these days: a director uncomfortable wholly giving himself up to either commercial or artistic concerns—whether or not he ever makes it back to Hollywood. ▀

## Docs delve deep into the heart of the world's worst prisons

FLICKS DV DETECTIVE

BRIAN GIBSON  
dvdetective@viewweekly.com

"However, I stand for 8-10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to 4 hours?"—handwritten comment by Donald Rumsfeld next to his signature on a September 2002 memo concerning new interrogation techniques at Guantanamo

"We listened as his soul cracked."—Abu Ghraib prisoner recalling the torture death of Manadel al-Jamadi

In 2004, reports emerged of abuse and torture at a prison complex in a country invaded and occupied on false pretenses. Yet the administration responsible for that war, that jail and other "closed site" and secret prisons around the world won re-election months later, a military service-avoiding president re-elected over a Vietnam veteran.

But good documentary-makers, like little good journalists, don't forget. In the Jun 25 issue of *The New Yorker*, an article by Seymour Hersh based on interviews with chief investigator General Antonio Taguba

examined what Donald Rumsfeld and others knew and hid about Abu Ghraib. A general said, "the abused detainees were 'only Iraqis'"; officials didn't seem to have read Taguba's report before meeting him; a military superior refused to see photographs of the abuse: "I don't want to get involved by looking, because what do you do with that information, once you know what they show?"

The prison shown in the HBO-produced doc *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* is where Hussein's regime had tortured and hung inmates. As director/producer Rory Kennedy and writer/producer Jack Youngelson diligently show, the hellish compound was occupied by a force just as savage.

The film begins with footage of the 1981 experiments by Dr Milgram in which people were given permission to shock others. "Who's going to take responsibility?" one of the shockers asks. A few bad apples were blamed for Abu Ghraib, but the nightmare could never have happened without a political network and military culture rotten at its cores.

Until an investigation finally delves into ultimate responsibility or creeps up the chain of command, *Ghosts of Abu*

*Ghraib* is the next best thing. This gripping procedural builds—with frighteningly cold recollections and sickening images—a file on Abu Ghraib that's stuffed with more evidence of terror than has ever come out of Guantanamo.

The film first traces the skirting of war rules and human rights statutes by the Bush Administration. A 2002 memo redefined torture as only acts causing organ failure or near-death. Rumsfeld signed off on harsher interrogation tactics at Guantanamo.

Negligence, callousness, detachment and denial trickled down. Soldiers were turned, without training, into prison guards shortly before the jail population exploded; contractors' pressure and Military intelligence took over, suggesting torture and abuse methods be used in a prison where at least 75 per cent were innocent civilians.

Not until the end, perhaps, will you realize that most of the soldiers being interviewed spent time in jail for their part in the atrocities. There is a numbness behind their words, Sabrina Hartman, unconcerned, holds a photo of her giving the thumbs-up beside the corpse of Manadel al-Jamadi. Roman Krol looks

haunted but says he is merely trying to forget what happened.

The photos of debasement and humiliation, the new normal in a place where "You started to forget what you saw the day before, because the next day would just be worse," was just the tip of the trashpile. Hersh writes that pictures of worse incidents never got out; the film points out that worse abuses happened in the interrogation room.

Fragments of former prisoners' faces are shown as they talk; one lost his father to the after-effects of torture. The prisoners interviewed for *Ghosts* were released without charge, abandoned to their memories.

The key link between Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib is Major General Geoffrey Miller, the commanding officer at the Cuba base who apparently went and "Gitmo-ized" Abu Ghraib, giving the go-ahead to brutalize prisoners in the Iraq prison. He appears in the Swedish documentary *Gitmo*, shot from 2002 to 2005 and recently released on disc. It begins as a true-story companion to Michael Winterbottom's *The Road to Guantanamo* (based on the experiences of innocent Englishmen in the prison). Directors Erik Gandini and Tarik Saleh look into the case

of Swedish citizen Mehti, kept at Camp Delta for two years.

*Gitmo* treads some of the same ground as *Ghosts*, sometimes more labouriously and unsteadily. But there are hints that Miller's predecessor, Rick Baccus, was removed for being too nice. An interrogator and a freed prisoner talk of dogs, chilling AC, sleep deprivation, sonic torment, slaps, sexual humiliation and other methods (which the interrogator says never elicits decent intelligence) that were essentially okayed by Miller and Rumsfeld after prisoners refused to talk in the fall of 2002.

Ultimately, an overwhelming sense of pain beyond words seeps past the official line. A war where contract mercenaries are brought in means a war of shadows, secrets and abandoned Geneva Conventions. The film leaves us with Mehti's silence and dull stare, and the collective murmur of prisoners floating into the night over a media liaison's empty rhetoric.

Today, there's talk of *Gitmo* being closed. But Miller has already been promoted and received a medal from the President. And the US military has still not released the number of deaths at Abu Ghraib. ▀

# All the cultural sensitivity of interracial porn

## THE WHITE MASAI IS ONLY INTERESTED IN THE FIRST HALF OF ITS TITLE

BRIAN GIBSON / [brian@vuuweekly.com](mailto:brian@vuuweekly.com)

Consider: In 1986, Swiss clothes designer Corinne Hofmann travelled to Kenya with her boyfriend, became fascinated by a Masai man and returned to live with him. The marriage eventually soured and she left husband Lketinga for good, returning to Switzerland with their daughter. Later, she wrote a book about her experience as a "White Masai" that became a huge bestseller in Germany and beyond.

Is this: a) European colonialism meets Jerry Springer? b) A cross-cultural romance ripe for commercial exploitation? c) International child abuse?

The answer, from the evidence of *The White Masai*, is d) all of the above.

In the movie adaptation, Carola (Nina Hoss) is entranced by a man in traditional dress while in Mombasa with her boyfriend. She remains to track him down. The man, Lemalian (Jacky Ido), is a Masai warrior who lives in the savannah of the Samburu game reserve, where the community herds goats.

The story, unfolding as dully as a connect-the-plot-points picture on a kids' menu, is always being sucked towards a black hole, that massive incomprehensibility of why this woman would do this.

*The White Masai* wants to explain Carola's obsession as soft-lit romance (straining, swelling music; lovers run to each other in slo-mo) and African adventure/travelogue, but it can't hide a darker answer: sexual exoticism, bordering on racist fetish. Remember Leni Riefenstahl? The notorious Nazi-era director of *Olympia* and *Triumph of the Will* later lived with and photographed Sudan's Nuba people, particularly wrestlers. As Susan Sontag noted, those photos, like the films, composed a fascist take on the body—as a beautifully cruel monument to the power of innate, superior strength—within the frame of an anthropological study.

THE FILM IS ALL about physical fascination. It starts with bodies on a beach. When Carola tracks down Lemalian, they go to a room and have sex without a word. Carola gazes at naked Masai men bathing. Carola and Lemalian stare at each other. And in a scene shot like interracial porn, the superior white woman has the black man make love to her properly.

Carola's told that women are treated as second to the goats, but Lemalian's often shown talking to other women in the tribe. We don't know who they are and what they're saying, though, since their dialogue isn't subtitled, which here only makes the Masai seem more puzzling and shadowy, while our struggling white protagonist is all the more heroic and reliable.

Except Carola asserts herself in a thoughtlessly stubborn, outsider way. She never bothers to be strong within

PREVIEW

FRI JULY 6, SUN JULY 8 (7 PM); SAT JULY 7, MON JULY 9 (9 PM)

**THE WHITE MASAI**

DIRECTED BY HEIMING HUNTERGUTH  
WRITTEN BY HUNTERGUTH, JOHANNES W. BETZ,  
GUNTHER ROHRBACH, RUTH TOMA &  
EDWIN K. J. MANN  
STARRING NINA HOSS & JACKY IDO  
METRO CINEMA, STD

the culture in which she's a visible minority of one. She rarely adapts or defers to this very different and welcoming people. *The White Masai* is interested in the White part of its title, but not the Masai culture, family and beliefs unless they upset Carola. They're just not important enough on their own.

Carola leaves after Lemalian has another fit of jealousy, but the film

never suggests his paranoia may have been influenced by the drug khat (as was perhaps the case with Lketinga). Both Carola's and Hofmann's departure essentially involve child abduction—removing a daughter from her father and community. So much for bridging two very different cultures.

But it's only Hofmann's version, her point of view that matters, and it's made her millions, with two subsequent books and now this film. *The White Masai* can try to hide its racist superiority and colonialism behind a love-dumb façade, but why should Hofmann profit any more from her skull-numbing naïveté? When Paris Hilton sells a kazillion copies of her jailhouse memoir, *In A Cell Without My Cell*, that will be crime enough. **v**



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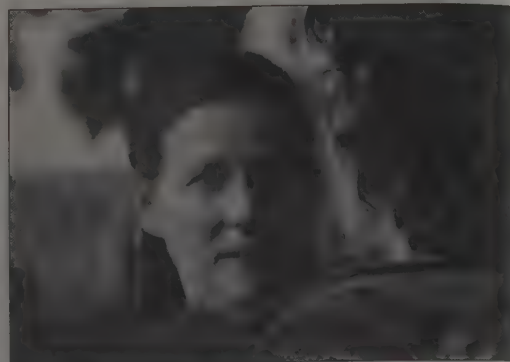
# Jindabyne almost Carvers off more than it can chew

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vancouverweekly.com

There are literary adaptations that attempt, frequently in vain, to follow their material to the letter. There are others that instead attempt to seize exclusively upon the essence of a literary work, discarding whatever doesn't live onscreen, and forge something fresh, decidedly cinematic and entirely its own thing, while remaining unmistakably linked to its source.

But there are still others that see in a work of literature a kernel of something fundamentally separate from the intentions of the original author. Adapted by Beatrix Christian and directed by Ray Lawrence, *Jindabyne* is a deeply interesting, brave, rather profound and very well-crafted example of this last variation on the paths from text to film, even if its ambitions perhaps push the source material a tad farther than it seems capable of travelling.

Raymond Carver's chillingly memorable short story "So Much Water So Close to Home"—which was filmed previously, and extremely differently, as one of the interlocking segments in Robert Altman's 1993 Carver anthology *Short Cuts*—concerns a group of fishing buddies who discover the corpse of a young woman adrift in a river near their remote campsite. A



**DRAMA**  
FRI JULY 6, SUN JULY 8, 9:30PM  
SAT JULY 7, MON JULY 9, 7PM  
**JINDABYNE**  
DIRECTED BY RAY LAWRENCE  
WRITTEN BY BEATRIX CHRISTIAN  
STARRING LAURA LINNEY, GABRIEL BYRNE,  
CHRIS HAYWOOD & DEBORRA-LEE FURNESS

long, daunting hike lies between the men and their vehicles or any other useful tool of civilization that might facilitate the report and recovery of the dead woman. Weighing their options—and seduced by the idyllic weather and fishing conditions—the men decide to stabilize the body, try to ignore it and enjoy their weekend, and report it once their trip is complete. She's already dead, they rationalize, so what's another day or two?

*Jindabyne* lifts Carver's morbid dilemma from its Pacific Northwest setting, placing it within a rugged corner of New South Wales, which makes for a visually handsome and evocative setting whose distinctive topography adds generously to the film's thematic layers. Not content with simply transplanting the tale, however, the film takes several more liberties: the couple at the heart of *Jindabyne* turn out not to be Australians but, curiously, an American and an Irishman. Claire and Stewart (the beautifully matched, equally brooding Laura Linney and Gabriel Byrne) are in a sense outsiders not only in their adopted country but to each other, the scenario suddenly emphasizing all that separates them in terms of sensibility, morality and even gender.

THINGS ARE EXTRAPOLATED further still by the unambiguous depiction of the woman's killer, a peripheral, quietly menacing figure who we meet from the start but know precious little about. But most conspicuous of all these alterations is the victim's status as an Aboriginal, a fact that doesn't fail to colour a single response to the men's dubious decision once it's made public. It's this nagging issue of race—would the men have waited if the girl was white?—that finally takes *Jindabyne* to a place far beyond Carver's spare little tale of male virility, negligence and hidden, misogynistic spite, turning it into something that's not only more outwardly political, but also, oddly enough, a sort of ghost story.

The spiritual elements of *Jindabyne* are best served in their more subtle forms of expression, especially the elegant, phantom-like camerawork and editing—Lawrence has only made two other features in his two-decade career, yet this dearth of productivity does not seem to have dulled his instincts for provocative camera placement, fluid transitions and smart levels of narrative disclosure.

The film feels somewhat more overcooked in its long road to a heavy resolution that's probably not all that necessary. What Lawrence and Christian, Linney and Byrne and everyone else in *Jindabyne* really nail is how they pull threads of imagery and tension and emotional complication from Carver's impressionistic prose. It's much harder, and not very advisable, to concoct more story than Carver already offered to begin with. **V**

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**JULY 5 - 9**

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# FILM WEEKLY

**BLACK BOOK** Infamous director Paul Verhoeven (*Robocop*, *Starship Troopers*) returned to his native Holland to craft this take on a Jewish singer who attempts to spy on the Nazis for the Dutch resistance during World War II. Read Josef Braun's review on page 44.

**I CAN'T SLEEP** *L'intrus* director Claire Denis' employs her typically moody style to tell the story of a Lithuanian actress looking for work in Paris. As she struggles to get by, she comes across a musician trying to make it as a single father and his drag queen brother, who harbours a terrible secret. **STANLEY A MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE**, Wed, Jul 11, 8:30PM

**JINDABYNE** Based on Raymond Carver's short story "So Much Water So Close To Home," *Jindabyne* stars Laura Linney and Gabriel Byrne as a couple vacationing in the Australian outback who discover the body of a young girl—but don't tell anyone about it until they get back. Read Josef Braun's review on page 46. **ZEILER HALL, THE CITADEL**, Fri, Jul 6, Sun, Jul 8, 9:30PM; Sat, Jul 7, Mon, Jul 9, 7PM

**LICENSE TO WED** Robin Williams stars as Reverend Frank, the meddling family spiritual advisor set to make newly engaged couple Mandy Moore and John Krasinski's life a living hell with his patented pre-marriage course.

**THE STUDENT PRINCE** The Edmonton Film Society's Noteworthy Musicals summer program continues with director Richard Thorpe's 1954 operetta about a stupefied prince who gets the arrogance knocked out of him by a trip to college, to see how the other half lives. Starring Mario Lanza, Ann Blyth and Edmund Purdom. **ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM**, Mon, Jul 8, 8PM

**TRANSFORMERS** The Autobots wage their battle to destroy the evil forces of the Decepticons in Michael Bay's update of a 1980s toy cartoon. With a fairly large human cast, ranging from Shia LeBeouf to Jon Voight, just how much screen time will the robots get? Read Bryan Birtles' review on page 48.

**THE WHITE MASAI** Based on fashion designer Corinne Hoffman's memoirs, director Herminie Huthenbuth directs this story about a European woman who falls in love with a Masai warrior while touring around Kenya, only to have the relationship go sour. Read Brian Gibson's review on page 45. **ZEILER HALL, THE CITADEL**, Fri, Jul 6, Sun, Jul 8, 7PM; Sat, Jul 7, Mon, Jul 9, 9:30PM

**HANG ON TO IT TO WIN!**

**PRIZES EVERY WEEK! ALL SUMMER!**

**VUE WEEKLY**

## FILM LISTINGS

ALL showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre for confirmation.  
FRI JULY 6-THU, JULY 12, 2007

### CHINA THEATRE-JASPER

**PIRE COMBATANT** (G) Daily 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

**TRANSFORMERS** (PG, violence not recommended for young children) Fri 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

**LICENSE TO WED** (PG, coarse language) Daily 1:30, 7:00, 9:15

### CINEMA DU CENTRE

**THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS** (G) Daily 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

**I CAN'T SLEEP** (14A, nudity and violence, French with English subtitles) Wed 12:30

### CINEMA CITY 13-MILWAUKEE 12

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# BIG CITY ENTERTAINMENT

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## Transformers: GM Ad in Disguise

BRYAN BIRTLES / [bryan@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:bryan@vancouverweekly.com)

The closest I ever got to the Transformers when I was a kid was this one toy that my mom brought home for me one day that changed from a fighter jet into a robot. Sounds like a Transformer alright, but it wasn't. The thing broke in about 20 minutes, which is when I discovered that the box it came in actually said Transformer: More is Meeting Your Eyes. It was a knock-off, and it soured me on toys that changed shape for years. I didn't even like those cars that changed colour when you breathed on them.

So when I went to the *Transformers* it was with some trepidation. I was worried that the legions of fanboys would sniff me out and gang up on me. I could probably take one or two nerds, but a whole theatre would be pushing it.

So I brought a nerd to protect me. It was humiliating.

Anyways, the movie centres around the ever-continuing battle between the Autobots, led by Optimus Prime, and the Decepticons, led by Megatron. Disney Channel star Shia LaBeouf stars as high-schooler Sam Witwicky whose grandfather's glasses hold the key to finding the All Spark—which is this giant cube that both groups of robots are vying for control of, because controlling it will win them the war. So the Autobots are trying to get the All Spark and save the human race while the Decepticons

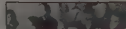
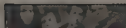
ROBOTS

BRYAN BIRTLES  
**TRANSFORMERS**  
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL BAY  
WRITTEN BY ROBERT CHOI, ALEX KURTZMAN,  
JIMMY KATZ  
STARRING SHIA LABOUEF, MEGAN FOX,  
JOSH DUHAMEL, TYRESE GIBSON, JON VOIGHT,  
PETER COLLIER, HUGO WEAVING

are trying to get it and destroy the human race.

**IF YOU'RE LIKE ME** and you don't have any idea why these robots are fighting each other, you might get a little lost in the plot intricacies, unless you bring your own nerd to explain it. Nonetheless, you can easily enjoy this movie for the action alone if you follow the first rule of watching action movies: don't ask questions. Shit's gonna go down, some other shit's gonna blow up and in the end, when it's all over, you can cheer the good guys. And a lot of cool shit goes down.

The worst part about this movie—something I'm sure nerds everywhere are currently complaining about in their blogs—is that all of the Autobots were basically an advertisement for GM cars. You've got one who is a Hummer, another who is a Peterbilt, a brand new Camaro, a Pontiac Solstice and a GMC Pickup. It was totally blatant and made me feel slimy, but, since the original cartoon was basically just a commercial for kids toys maybe it's only fitting that a live action version is a commercial for adult toys. ♥



# The Bebop Cowboys tip a hat to the past and go down swinging

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com

When you look at this stuff, it's really a part of our social history in Canada, and we tend not to look back," says Steve Briggs, guitarist for the **Bebop Cowboys**. He's noting the role that western swing music played in Canadian culture during the 1930s, '40s and '50s, when dance halls were a place for musicians and audiences to come together for a night of escape from the drudgeries of life.

**PREVIEW** | THUR. JUL. 12 (8 PM)  
**THE BEBOP COWBOYS**  
THE NORWOOD LEGION (11150 — 82 AVE), \$18



While the country's cultural landscape has certainly evolved throughout the years, with western swing slipping away from the mainstream, Briggs and the Bebop Cowboys have spent three albums doing their part to bring the genre back into the hearts of Canadians, the band's stated goal ever since forming after Briggs and vocalist/harp player Howard Willett met at their kids' daycare and discov-

ered that they shared a mutual love of western swing.

"We said it would be great to go see western swing and we realized that the only way we'd be able to see

it is if we formed a band and went out and did it ourselves, so we put together a residency on a Wednesday

ILLSCARLET FOR PHILIPPA

# Plumb and the Willing search for Beauty in this World

LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vancouverweekly.com

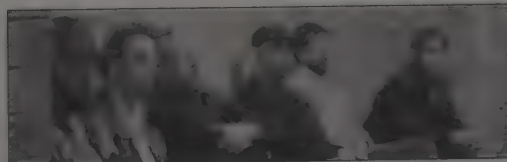
This week **Jason Plumb** and **the Willing** will bring a selection of vocal-heavy pop ballads to a different kind of music venue: the Roxy Theatre. Though it's a bit unusual, Plumb says that with a preference for melody over spine-shattering dance beats, playing a venue like the Roxy makes sense.

"This record is pretty listen-y music," explains Plumb. "It's not really dance music, so the Roxy is the right spot to do this kind of thing, especially having a full string section."

Featuring members of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Plumb's classical companions number eight—two cellos, two violas and four violins—but on *Beauty in this World*, Plumb's latest release, the strings recorded two final passes, effectively creating a 16-piece section.

The strings added lyrical voice to tunes that already had an almost overpowering sense of melody to them—and that's just the way Plumb likes it.

"These days, with the hip-hop



**PREVIEW** | SAT. JUL. 7 (7 PM)  
**JASON PLUMB  
AND THE WILLING**  
WITH JAMES MURDOCH  
THE ROXY THEATRE, \$25

movement and everything, we're a culture that's driven by beat, rather than melody," offers Plumb. "I've always been a sucker for melody, and I think it's because of the kind of music that was played around my house as I was growing up."

**PLUMB'S CHILDHOOD IDOLS** can definitely be heard on *Beauty*—not that it's an album of covers or anything. Rather, Plumb tries to capture the feel

of his favourite music without resorting to outright mimicry.

"I'm going for vocal-heavy, ballady, catchy songs with a lot of string and vocal embellishment," he explains. "I like a lot of Elton John and old Bee Gees."

A veteran of the Canadian music scene, Plumb has played many gigs in Edmonton before, and has developed a loyal following in Capital City.

"Edmonton has always embraced me as a singer-songwriter. Whenever I've come into town I've always been supported by a lot of great people," he says. "I think it's an under-appreciated city as far as music goes. It's a very musical place."



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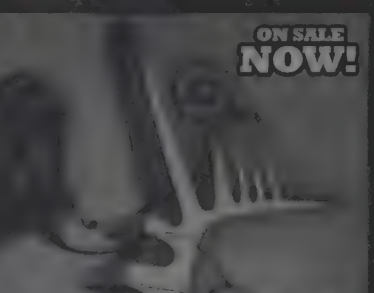
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**SHARON BONE** (The Roots)  
and a live full of Black, Spm 2am, no cover  
**SHARON BONE** (The Roots)  
stage hosted by Alberto Cruz, 8-10pm  
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stage hosted by Alberto Cruz, 8-10pm  
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Treasure, Underground (MEM)

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**BLACKSPOT CAFE**  
\$7 (ALL AGES)  
"Why are these people chasing me?"

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\$7 (ALL AGES)  
"Why are these people chasing me?"

## FRI LIVE MUSIC

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**SHARON BONE** (The Roots)  
stage hosted by Alberto Cruz, 8-10pm

and dancing every Sat 10pm-1am

DJX

BACKSTAGE PASS (Sat) Saturday

Top 40 with DJ Soundwave

BLACKBOX FREEHOUSE (Sat) on two

levels

BOOTS (Sat) Night for men only

free pool and tummy, DJ Annette

DECADES (Sat) Soul Heaven Saturday's

Top 40 and Top 100 hits with DJ

T-Bones, Femme Funk and local/foreign

artists presented by NewSound

Entertainment, no covers, Sun-Sat

DELUXE KARAOKE (Sat) Top 40 and

Top progressive rock, disco and

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THIS FRIDAY! EARLY SHOW!

# ill Scarlett

FRIDAY JULY 6 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQUIRED - TICKETS ALSO AT MEGATUNES & BLACKBYRD

HELLCAT RECORDING ARTISTS

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JULY 8 - VELVET UNDERGROUND

EARLY SHOW DOORS 6 PM - ALL AGES

TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES & BLACKBYRD

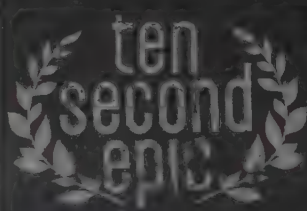
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FRIDAY SEPT. 28 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ  
TIX AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD  
AND FREECLOUD



THE SET & LIVING WITH LIONS

JULY 12  
STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 7 PM - ALL AGES

TICKETS ALSO AT  
MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD  
& FS (WEED)

VUE  
WEEKLY

# DO MAKE SAY THINK

WOLFESEN

OCTOBER 26

STARLITE ROOM

18+ ID REQ - DOORS 8 PM - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN

# from Autumn to Ashes

JULY 17 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 7 PM - ALL AGES  
TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES,  
BLACKBYRD, FS (WEED) & FREECLOUD

# EAT

1-2-3  
TOUR  
ACROSS  
CANADA

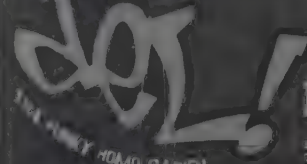
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FS (WEED) AND BLACKBYRD

with  
BUKUE ONE • DJ ZAC HENDRIX  
& A-PLUS



JULY 21  
STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQUIRED  
TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES,  
BLACKBYRD,  
SOULAR & TUSH

VUE  
WEEKLY

# SAOSIN

RECEIVING  
END OF  
SIRENS

JULY 22 - STARLITE ROOM

VUE  
WEEKLY

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# They Shoot Horses Don't They? goes to the mat

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vancouverweekly.com

It seems that for today's bands, putting out one album per year is the exception rather than the rule. With album sales not pulling in the scilla they once did, and with touring being so time consuming, it seems like fans of any particular band count themselves lucky to see a new batch of songs every three years or so. With Vancouver's **They Shoot Horses Don't They?** it's different, however, as the band has just released its second full length album only one year after the release of their first.

"I think with that kind of thing it's mostly marketing—people say, 'oh, we can't really put out an album, everybody's sick of us, we've gotta make them wait,'" says singer Nut Brown about bands that see long breaks between album releases. "We don't write particularly quickly—ten songs a year is not that fast. We're not

PREVIEW

SAT. JUL 7 (7 PM)

## THEY SHOOT HORSES DON'T THEY?

WITH SHAPES AND SIZES, MIRACLE FORTRESS, DESIDERATA, AURORA, ORANGE IN THE LIGHT, ARBYLL HALL (8560 - 88 ST), \$10 (ALL AGES)

really in a position where we don't have to worry about our career because we're kind of bottom feeders. I think it's better to just punch, punch, punch."

With that kind of punch, punch, punch mentality, **They Shoot Horses Don't They?** heads out on a marathon tour which will see them on the road for over two months straight, starting in Canada and then moving into the United States as the band zig zags across most of North America. Even with such a long tour on the horizon, Brown explains that the band feels no trepidation.



"We're very much looking forward to it, particularly Canada. I like traveling in the States, but Canada is always very nice to us," he says. "This

is the longest tour we've ever done, but we're kind of into pushing it, taking it to extremes and coming out the other side."

AND THOUGH AUDIENCES have been very nice to them, some music blogs—including the indie music powerhouse *Pitchfork*—have been less than receptive to the music being made by the band.

"They don't like us," Brown sighs bluntly. "You know, everybody looks at *Pitchfork*, everybody hates it, everybody loves it. I complained about it before we got bad reviews, but now if I complain about it it's because we got bad reviews."

"We come from the art school world and criticism is a big part of it. We had to put our ar up on the wall and everybody looks at it and tells you what they think of it and what it's doing, so for me it's a part of the process. I'm not saying we're going to take what they say seriously, but that kind of feedback does have an effect ... now we got something to prove."



## Ska punkers hit Warped speed again

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

Taking a page out of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Toronto's **IllScarlett** figured out early in its young career that, as Dale Carnegie wrote back in the '30s, success is 15 per cent professional knowledge and 85 per cent "the ability to express ideas, assume leadership and to arouse enthusiasm among other people."

A few years ago, the boys in the band decided that they were going to try to get on stage at the Toronto stop of the Vans Warped Tour. They actually managed to talk themselves into the show, but getting on stage proved to be impossible. Undeterred, they set up outside the gate to perform for the folks waiting to get in. Word spread and before they knew it, they were getting an invite to play a barbecue hosted by Warped Tour creator Kevin Lyman.

Relating the story over the phone from Vancouver, where the band was just a few hours away from its first performance of its third Warped Tour, IllScarlett's vocalist and guitar player

Alex Norman is both humble and pleased with how a spur-of-the-moment decision catapulted IllScarlett into the big leagues.

"It was totally unplanned, like most things that we do—last minute, unplanned—but it usually works out," he says. "And it turned out to be one of the smartest things we've ever done."

**NOT THAT ILLSCARLETT** wasn't already on its way before then. They had already developed quite a fan base in Southern Ontario and the band's first two EPs—*IllP* and *Clearly in Another Fine Mess*—were pretty easy to unload.

And why not? The band's—in addition to Norman, there's Bill Marr on guitar, Swav Pior on drums and John Doherty (son of the Mama's and the Papa's Denny Doherty) on bass—infectious blend of ska and pop punk conjures up one of its clear influences, Sublime. And IllScarlett's latest album—*All Day With It*—was produced



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# THE BEBOP COWBOYS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49

night in Toronto," he recalls. "That was a great fertile ground to get the band going. I'd bring in arrangements, or sometimes Burke [Carroll], our pedal steel player, would bring in an arrangement and we just worked it out right on the spot. Sometimes we'd do the Dick Clark thing and say 'what do you think, folks—thumbs up or thumbs down? Should it stay in the set?'"

The audience has always been a vital part of the western swing experience, and that will be especially true here, where the band will be playing an authentic dance hall gig at the Norwood Legion. Briggs is optimistic that the show will hark back to the communal spirit of earlier times.

"We're hoping that people will come out and do some two-stepping—you don't have to two-step actually, you can do whatever you want," he laughs. "It's jump blues, it's country, it's rock 'n' roll all in one, but it's music that doesn't take itself too seriously and it's music that was conceived and performed to get people up to dance. That was an era when people went out and danced not only on the weekends, but on the weekdays, too. The bands were doing five-nighters and they just travelled all the time. I've talked to some of the old-timers around here and they spent decades just travelling and playing. It was an era that was supposed to be economically depressed for the country and it was a golden age for these guys."

WITH ALL THAT TRAVELLING and performing, it's not surprising that the original western swing musicians were often some of the best players around—Briggs calls the style a precursor to rock 'n' roll, pointing out that many of the earliest rock records featured western swing players in the bands—and the Bebop Cowboys are no different, laying down plenty of

virtuosity too. A flurry of notes on its own isn't exactly danceable material, though, so the band keeps its focus on the rhythm.

"We love to have nice tight arrangements where we can blow and improvise, but the idea is to serve the song, and that's the great thing about western swing, too, is that the songs are so good," he says. "We tried on this album to write songs that are befitting of that sort of quality."

Briggs is aware that our times have

changed considerably from the original dance hall era, but he believes that the mark of a true musician has not.

"Musicians are the same no matter what era," he explains. "A true musician just wants to learn his craft, get better and if they're really a true musician, they realize they're probably not ever going to get there but they keep working at it until they fall off the twig, and those old guys were like that." ♡

## ILL SCARLET

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

by Matthew Wilder, who was behind No Doubt's wildly successful *Tragic Kingdom* back in the '90s.

Despite the upward trajectory of the band's career, however, Norman admits that being on the Warped Tour is still a sobering experience for them.

"It makes you feel really small and

unimportant," he says. "Yeah, there's just so many wicked bands to see that, like ... you know, we're still like a baby band, so ... there's so many huge bands on the tour, like Pennywise and Bad Religion and you're just a little band, so you're going up there to try and get people to listen to you."

But if the boys show the type of ingenuity and balls that got them on the tour in the first place, they probably don't have anything to worry about. ♡

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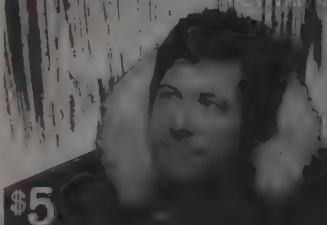


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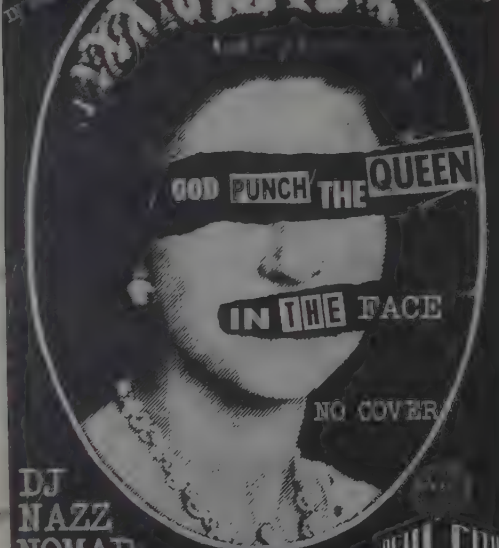
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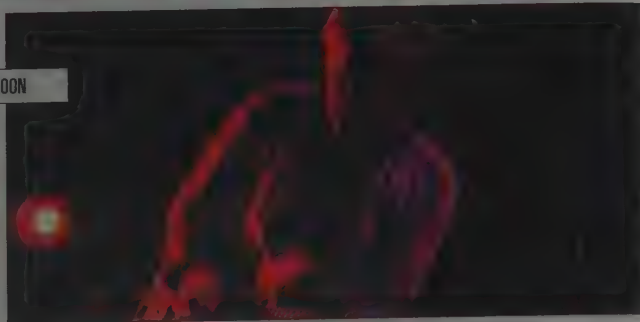
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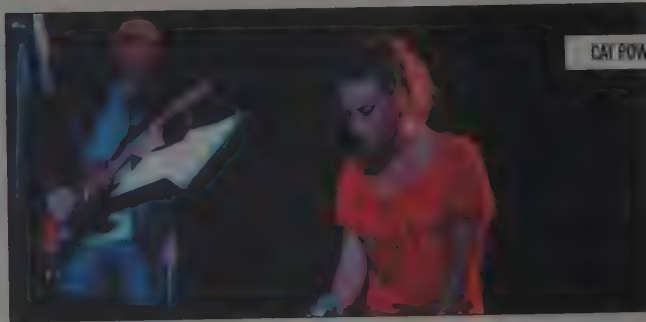
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**SPOON**

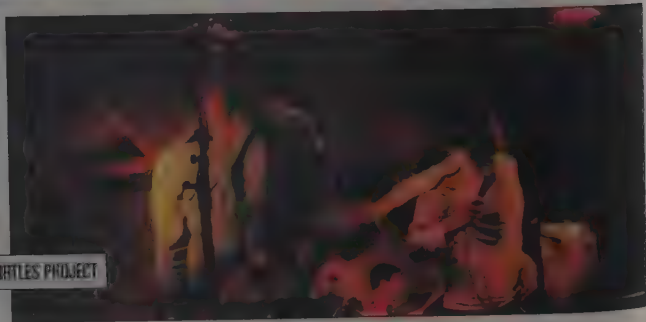


**REVUE / WED, JUN 27 — SAT, JUN 30 / SLED ISLAND / VARIOUS VENUES, CALGARY** It's official—the Edmonton-Calgary rivalry is dead. Try as I might, wandering around the multiple venues of Sled Island I couldn't find anything to make me feel smugly superior to our neighbours to the south. Every Calgarian I talked to was friendly and smiling, eager to dispel their image as a bunch of rich rednecks. I didn't even see one cowboy hat the whole time! And, judging by their impeccable taste in music, they seem to think pretty highly of Edmonton, too—roughly a dozen Edmonton bands played alongside headline acts such as Les Savy Fav, Spoon and Cat Power. The Calgary bands weren't too shabby either: folksters Woodpigeon, in particular, are going to soon be the recipients of some much-deserved hype. For a first-time festival, Sled Island opened a lot of eyes, and as long as it promises to keep bringing awesome music to Alberta, Edmontonians should be excited! —JOEL KELLY / [joel@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:joel@vancouverweekly.com)

**CAT POWER**



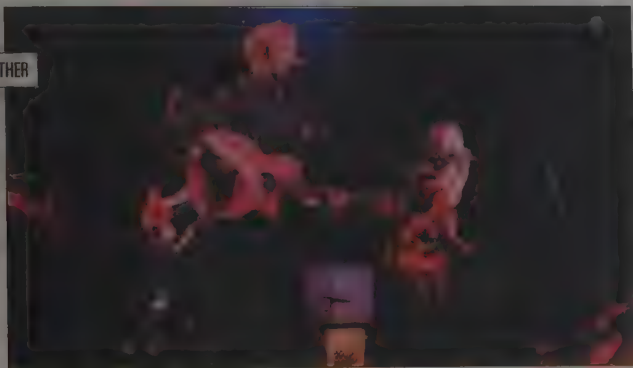
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THE WALKMEN

MOTHER MOTHER



**REVUE / SAT, JUN 30 / THE WHITE STRIPES / SHAW CONFERENCE CENTRE** Success is often frowned upon in the music industry—at least by the hipper-than-hip music “connoisseurs”—and there’s a tendency for backlash whenever a band starts getting popular. While I’m not going to argue that Nickelback deserves more respect, I will say that the White Stripes are worthy of the accolades that have been tossed their way. The band took complete control of the cavernous confines of the Shaw Conference Centre with a show marked by simplicity in both stage design and music. Singer/guitarist Jack White veered wildly throughout, at times taking on the persona of a carnival barker, other times looking every bit the mad scientist with his wild hair hiding his eyes while spotlights illuminated him from below, casting eerie shadows over his face. Then there were the moments of tenderness—well, as tender as it could get with that kind of volume—when he locked into Meg White’s steady, perfect-for-the-song drumming, standing to face his band mate and creating a monster groove shared between them before it filtered out to the audience. The most touching example of their relationship came when Meg stepped to the front of the stage to sing “In the Cold, Cold Night” and Jack retreated to a spot behind the drums, accompanying her on guitar while allowing the spotlight to fall on Meg alone. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com



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THURSDAY JULY 12 (IRON DOME PRESENTS)

## TEN SECOND EPIC

THE SET & LIVING WITH LIONS

FRIDAY JULY 13

## OMEGA THEORY

WASEPIC & ANOTHER COLOUR

SATURDAY JULY 14

## WONDERWALL

THE 90'S  
RETRO PARTY

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# ALBUM REVIEWS

# NEW SOUNDS

COLD IRON  
VANCOUVER  
INDEPENDENT

EDEN MUNRO / edna@vuuvuwebly.com



THIS ROCKS

Not-quite-in-tune guitars, strum sad and lonely chords, strings buzzing as Cold Iron—Jobi Mihajlovich and Sean Curtis form the core, while some of their friends join in on various songs—works through the complex and moody double album *Vancouver*. Mihajlovich and Curtis alternate and share the vocals, and at times their words are burrowed deep in the music, nearly inaudible until everything cracks and the volume lurches upwards. It sounds more like an impromptu, unrehearsed live performance than something meant for posterity. If it seems a little ramshackle, that's because it is, and it's fantastic, providing a much-welcomed antidote to the sickly corporate fingers that too often weave their way into even the best groups' recordings.

Of the two sides here, the first is focused around stripped-down acoustic songs—the thunderous and dark minor chords of "Fight the Devil" mixing well with the take-me-down-to-the-river gospel of "Let's Go." The second disc is a little more experimental, with the oddly titled "George Clooney's Beard"—a noisy instrumental that conjures images of a dance club somewhere in the jungles of South America—and the Led Zepplin-esque acoustic picking of the again oddly titled "Welcome to the VC, Bitch ... Drive Safely" nestling in precariously amongst the other tracks.

The music is well worn, torn and frayed like the sound of a dozen long nights. *Vancouver* sounds like Cold Iron set up in a living room with a

bunch of friends, some smokes and not just a little bit of wine, and started playing, sharing songs and carving a record out of wood and wire. I hope that the band does it again soon.

TOUCH AND NATO  
THE REPRESENTATIVES IN INTELLIGENT  
DESIGN  
UP IN ARMS

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuuvuwebly.com



THIS ROCKS

The first thing that hits you about Touch and Nato's debut *The Representatives in Intelligent Design* is Nato's deft hand at serving up beats. His deep grooves yank you into their world for a dark, moody ride, forcing you to mull over Touch's verbal gymnastics. While the Edmonton duo is walking the same path Cadence Weapon (who also makes an appearance late in the album) tramped down, offering up more than one reference to our mighty burg, Touch and Nato clearly have hip hop right down in their marrow.

The strength of "Somethin' Real" digs into you, as Touch and Word-smkh try to make sense of the problems of murder, homelessness and drug abuse, immortalizing Sara Easton: "18-year-old girl shot in the streets, and it wasn't a stray, random victim happy birthday." From urban malaise to freedom of speech to organized religion, Touch and Nato land solidly on their worldview, beckoning their listeners to stand up for the things that they believe in. My only real complaint with *Intelligent Design* is that I find it a bit disingenuous to drop the bitch and 'ho bombs throughout the album, after saying that words are powerful in "Somethin' Real" and before imploring us that women

deserve respect in "Four Letter Word."

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS  
SIGHTS AND SOUNDS  
SMALL MAN

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuuvuwebly.com



THIS IS OK

Okay. Let me say first of all that there is nothing particularly wrong with Sights and Sounds's debut EP. It's pretty awesome, in fact, with its crushing guitars, punishing drums and heartfelt vocals. The only problem is that, due to the circumstances, it could have been way more interesting if it had sounded different.

Sights and Sounds is the side project of some of the people behind Winnipeg hardcore band Comeback Kid, the slightly more emo oriented Sick City and a couple of other guys. Sights and Sounds, as a separate entity from these bands, doesn't stray far enough from the general emo-hardcore ideal to truly set it apart from the projects that preceded it. It's clear these guys know how to rock the genre, but they don't take very many risks. And maybe it's just me, but I think artistic and musical risks are more interesting than middle of the road safe stuff.

Frankly, the band might have fallen flat on their faces had they taken the big risks that I'm championing, but even that could have been really interesting. I guess what I'm saying is that a side project is not about to reflect poorly on your main gig, so why not change it up a little?

BUFFALO TOM  
THREE EASY PIECES  
NEW WEST

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuuvuwebly.com



THIS IS OK

I was really surprised to see the name Buffalo Tom come across the CD desk, and especially surprised that it was all new. Hadn't the Boston trio faded out like the strum of an unrecorded guitar? Sure they never officially broke up after 1998's *Smitten* but nine years off! In the wake of a Dinosaur Jr reunion, though, it probably makes sense that Buffalo Tom steps up with another recording, too.

*Three Easy Pieces* begins with a bang in "Bad Phone Call," and the first five tracks are a wonderful blend of a nod to Tom's past countrified rock and a long stare forward at what the future could possibly hold for a rebranded Tom. But the album takes a serious turn into the mire when "Renovating" assaults the eardrums with painful backup singing by Clint Conley. The next couple songs are pretty uninspired, almost sounding like a tired, used-up bar band. But things return to identifiable Buffalo Tom territory for the last four tracks. "Hearts of Palm" is akin to slowly revealing

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track off of '95's *Sleepy Eyed*, while the mournful pedal steel of "Thrown" subtly beseeches you into another listen.

#### KEVIN PARENT FACELESS WOLF FACING WINTER AUDIOGRAM

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / [marychrista@vueweekly.com](mailto:marychrista@vueweekly.com)

When confronted with a record so obviously capably made, it's extra disappointing that it has all the emotional heft of an *ABC After School Special*. Actually, the sentiment isn't at fault so much as the lyrics are—Kevin Parent comes from the Bryan Adams school of poetry, rhyming "that look in your eyes" with "the dream never dies" and the like. You can play the "guess the next line" drinking game and be gone by the third track, possibly with early liver failure—an effect heightened by the serious, straightforward, rootsy delivery. Parent's undeniably buttery voice and his frequent bottle-related metaphors.

While my Inner Politically Correct Scold insists I mention that Parent is a respected Quebecois musician and songwriter with four Francophone albums under his belt, my inner cynic is slouching behind the Scold, wise-cracking that any of the folk luminaries that guested on the record, including Jim Cuddy, or the small army of musicians employed, could have talked this gifted artist into some rewrites or co-writes and that Parent's wordsmithing, so banal as to occasionally be insulting, is patently about reaching a new market—or in the industry parlance, reaching a wider audience.

#### LIFHOUSE WHO WE ARE GEFFEN

BRYAN BIRTLES / [bryan@vueweekly.com](mailto:bryan@vueweekly.com)

Don't bands get tired of sounding the same? Major labels are tearing their hair out wondering why nobody is buying records any more, but they keep putting out, well, stuff like this. Lifhouse sounds like the most boring "alternative" band you can think of, with Chad Kroeger's slightly less gravely voiced cousin singing vocals.

So is it any wonder that nobody's buying this? Or if they happen to like a song or two, they'll just download it instead of buying the whole stupid album? I mean, when you get enough airplay on mainstream radio—even mainstream radio that tries really hard to convince you that they're not—your melodies are bound to sound catchy through sheer repetition. So Lifhouse will have a hit single, everyone who enjoys it will steal it and record execs will lose more profits and more hair.

## Who loves a good Canadian book? Anyone?

### MUSIC | ENTER SANDOR

STEVEN SANDOR  
[steven@vueweekly.com](mailto:steven@vueweekly.com)

Last week, Statistics Canada released its study of this country's culture industry, and it didn't paint a rosy picture. According to StatsCan, the country's trade deficit in what it called "culture goods"—everything from CDs to DVDs to books and magazines—rose to \$1.8 billion for all of 2006.

What does that mean? That Canadians imported a heck of a lot more cultural goods than they exported last year. While Canada imported 3.2 per cent less cultural material than it did in 2005—thanks, mainly, to a drop in CD sales worldwide—it also exported a lot less, increasing the gap.

But when the report is cracked open, the picture, at least for the music industry, isn't all that bad. According to StatsCan, Canadians imported nearly \$132 million worth of compact disc recordings last year, but the country exported nearly \$123 million worth of CDs. That gives us a trade deficit of somewhere around \$9 million—not very significant at all. Basically, it's a wash. Considering that Canada is a country with a small population, and with a world of music available for sale, it's heartening to know that for almost every song imported into Canada, there's one exported.

To be clear, the only imports that counted came from labels, not bands, that exist outside of Canada. For example, buying an American band's

disc that came out on a major label wouldn't count, as all the majors have branch offices based in Canada—so their releases are all "domestic," no matter where the artist hails from.

Still, it is impressive that our exports almost equal the imports. Of course, Avril Lavigne, Nickelback and Nelly Furtado should all take their share of the credit for helping Canadian music imports buck the cultural trend. But, as pop stars don't sell records in nearly the same batches that they used to, a lot of stock should also be placed in how well our nation's music scene is perceived internationally. Look, the Arcade Fire might be full of hipsters, but it's only one of many bands that have reversed the long-standing rule of the music industry, that Canadian heritage should be kept as a dirty secret.

The other thing that stunned me was the difference between printed matter and sound recordings. Canadians imported \$1.4 billion worth of books and magazines last year, more than 10 times the worth of the CDs brought into the country. The fact that music sales pale in comparison to book sales—I mean, not even close—was a surprise to me.

But it is the book biz, not the music biz, that is creating such a huge discrepancy when it comes to our cultural trade deficit. If only the world, and our own consumers, loved Canadian writers the way they love Canadian bands ...

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

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Here are a few of the fine developments I expect you will have enjoyed by the end of July: growing pains that feel pretty damn good; the dissolution of wishy-washy wishes that had been keeping you distracted from your burning desires; a vivid vision of what you want to be when you grow up; living proof that you're not just an armchair adventurer; the friendliest lust ever; a new playing; and insight into why fanaticism can be very useful in moderation. ♥

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The Friends of the Edmonton Public Library need volunteers for 1-2 Saturday/month or Thu evenings to help with preparations for the 2007 fall book sale

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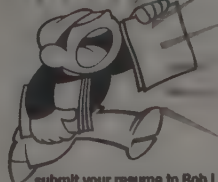
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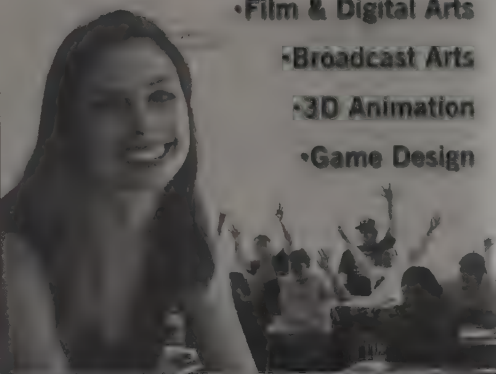
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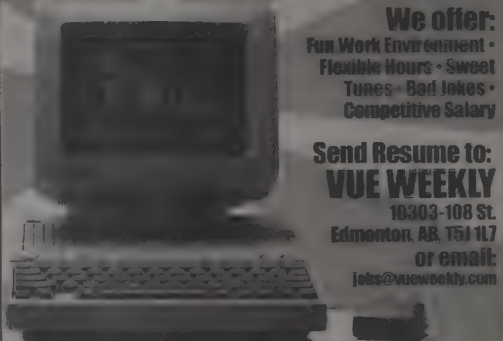
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DEAR ANDREA

I recently broke up with my girlfriend (I'm a woman). Everything had started out peachy and remained so until about a month and a half before the breakup. It seemed that our growing emotional intimacy triggered her childhood issues (neglect, abuse, you name it, followed by addiction, now thankfully in recovery) and she started pushing me away, then moved on to heavy criticisms and blaming. As an abuse survivor myself, I know the signs and can empathize, but I feel that I've worked through most of my issues with intimacy, whereas she is, in her own words, "scared of loving."

Anyway, our sex life suffered greatly. I felt that I was giving a lot and not receiving much. I tried talking with her about

all this, but she insisted that I was the one at fault for everything. Finally, drained and heartbroken, I left her. Since then, she's apologized and told me that she's working on changing her patterns (through therapy, support groups, etc). And she wants a second chance.

I feel relieved to be out of a tense and draining relationship, but I also miss the good stuff we had (hot sex—most of the time—and friendship, if not emotional intimacy). Could her willingness to heal (and treat me with respect) make it worth taking another stab at it? And if the sex and friendship worked for us but not the relationship, what are the odds that we could be lovers but not partners (we're both non-monogamous)?

LOVE, ONE FROM COLUMN A...

DEAR A

Oh, eek, I'm a little scared of your ex, to tell you the truth. I'll probably get in trouble for this but she immediately put me in

mind of stories a friend of mine tells of working at an extremely PC community nonprofit and the way interns and other untested newbies would respond to a request that they do some—oh, I dunno, I think they call it *work*!—with a trembling lip and a defiant stance and a declaration that "I find that really triggering." "Oh I'll trigger you, all right" my friend would think, but of course you can't say that sort of thing to that sort of person, you can only try to gently redirect them, like toddlers or puppies, if you don't want to be accused of being abusive and hierarchical and tool-of-the-patriarchy and end up having to endure lengthy sessions with a mediator wearing chunky ethnic jewelry and many complicated but unstructured garments woven from colorful twigs and berries.

I can't really answer your last two questions, of course, because even if I had actual statistics to give you ("blah per cent of couples attempting friendship-with-benefits following a breakup end up throwing

kitchen implements at each other within six weeks, while only blah per cent of couples attempting friendship *without* benefits throws plates...") they would still just be statistics, interesting to read but more descriptive than predictive.

**JUST GOING BY THE FAIRLY** small amount of info I've got. I have to admit I'm doing a little preemptive cringing and ducking myself. Things just sound a little too fresh and volatile yet to go trying any tricks as death-defying as getting back together but not really.

So, while I won't lay odds or place bets, I'm happy to make a wild prediction based on nothing more than having a good head for these things: attempting to reassemble your former relationship minus what are arguably the most important elements (emotional intimacy, not to mention LUV) is doomed to failure. Before you know it you will be "triggering" her again, this time quite possibly on pur-

pose. I think you'd do best to look elsewhere for sex and attempt friendship cautiously if at all, with your ex. If you're meant to be together (by which I don't mean "fated," but merely "suited," in case you were wondering) you will find yourselves shifting back in that direction when you're ready.

It's nice and all that she's "willing to heal," not to mention treat you with respect, but frankly, all you have is her word on that. She hasn't actually *done* either one so far, has she? And also frankly, you sound neither so hard up nor so desperately pining for her as so make it worth the probable unpleasantness.

Exes are in some way the easy choice—you don't have to go out and meet anyone, which for some of us anyway can be a powerful draw, but on the other hand you don't get anything better than what you already had and gave away, and usually with good reason. I just wouldn't.

LOVE, ANDREA

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**Volunteer yoga instructor** needed for Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre. For info phone Rita Mittelsteadt, 433-5887.

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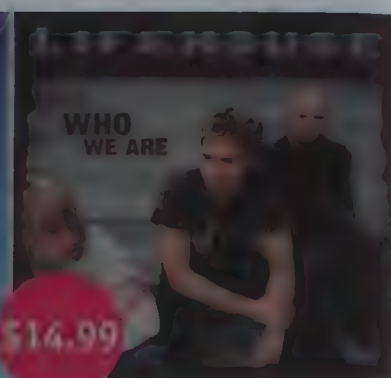


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*Arrivals & Departures*, Silverstein's third and most motivating release, expresses a strong message of how life is a series of human interactions with scores of people - and the importance of never taking them for granted. Catch Silverstein on tour this summer with Rise Against.

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